

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION IS RESERVED.]

[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 318.—VOL. XIII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING JUNE 5, 1869.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[EUREKA.]

AFTER THREE YEARS.

BY THE

Author of "The Golden Apple," "Aspasia," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIV.

MISS LLOYD entered the cosy drawing room of Honeysuckle cottage with a queenly step, and a graceful head poised to a rather more stately height than usual, although there was a serene, even gentle smile upon her face. She kept one arm around Kitty's waist, caressingly; but she knew very well that someone else would see that it meant something beyond affection. She gave him credit for quick perception—keen, sharp intelligence, and knew he would understand, as well as if she had spoken it in words, that though she consented, from tenderness to the dear little hostess, to meet him in a friendly and amicable way, she still flung down her gage of defiance, and meant to keep her protecting care of Kitty.

Lord Cuthbert lost the effect of the entrance. He was standing in the bay window with Miss Barbara, and the latter had laid one dainty hand on his shoulder, and was looking up into his face, with those bright, cheery eyes of hers, still brighter for the tears flinging over them. The young nobleman was speaking earnestly, a little tremulously, if they could judge by the nervous tremor of the sensitive lips; and the fine eyes held an eloquence of sincerity and truth that could not fail to impress even Hester Lloyd's proud and prejudiced heart.

She swept Kitty noiselessly back upon the threshold, and when there, spoke quietly to draw the attention of the pair in the bay window, and thus announce their approach.

Lord Cuthbert started, and a grave dark shadow seemed to fall upon his face. Something beyond and deeper, Miss Barbara read in his eyes, and pondered over it afterward, puzzled and uneasy concerning its meaning. Now, however, was no time for speculation. She stepped forward promptly, with her own beaming smile.

"Ah, girls, so you are ready and here. And here

is my boy. Cuthbert, have you met these dear friends of mine? Miss Lloyd, and Miss Cartwright—Lord Cuthbert Lyle. Now you must promise to be very good, and very happy friends."

Lord Cuthbert bowed rather gravely, and just touched the tips of the fair hands extended to him. Not at all in a slighting fashion, nothing could have been more respectful and deferential than his manner, but it said plainly to Miss Lloyd:

"You need not be afraid. I shall not presume in the slightest degree upon this good fortune thrust upon me. You shall have no reason for complaint."

Miss Lloyd coloured faintly, as she swept over lightly to the little curtained nook where the piano stood. She was angry and vexed, because she somehow felt humiliated and rebuked, and to cover the unwonted discomposure, she laid her fingers lightly on the pearl keys, and said gaily:

"Will you have a triumphal march to usher in the halcyon season, dear Miss Barbara?"

"Oh, thank you, Hester, nothing could be more acceptable. Your playing is always a delight."

And Miss Lloyd sat down to the piano, and played, as she did all things, with exquisite grace, and earnest spirit. The brilliant strains died out lingeringly, but the fair performer did not rise. She sat there listlessly, and presently began on a simple but touching air, whose sweet appeal brought the tears to Kitty's eyes.

"Oh, yes, Hester, that exquisite ballad! you will sing it for us," solicited Miss Evesham.

And Hester Lloyd sang a tender, pathetic ballad of the stricken, woful heart of a hopeless lover, immolating his whole life's happiness, for love's sake.

Lord Cuthbert had turned hastily to the window, and one could not judge by his face of the effect upon him, but Miss Barbara was twinkling away the tears from her eyes, and Kitty sat with clasped hands and quivering lips, never stirring her eyes from following those supple, gem-decked fingers.

"If only our opera singers would put your spirit into their notes, my dear Hester, I think we should once more turn to music for inspiration," said Miss Barbara, gently; "there is no one among all my

friends—and I have a few musical celebrities in the list—who can put such a heart into their voice as you do. That poor, struggling soul! how you thrilled us with its wail of anguish."

Miss Lloyd had played away the nervousness and vexation which had first drifted her towards the piano. She rose and came out from the curtains with a radiant smile.

"Oh, not yet!" implored Kitty.

"Not yet, indeed!" echoed Miss Barbara, "you must not leave us so sorrowful. Lift us up, invigorate and charm us with something grand and high, and yet real and true. You will know what to select. Indeed, you must not come away yet."

Miss Lloyd stood a moment irresolute, and glanced towards his lordship, whose averted face still turned to the window.

"Oh, you need not question Cuthbert. He has no voice to speak, because you have bound him with such a spell. Look around, Cuthbert, and give a sign that you wish to hear more from Miss Lloyd. She misinterprets your silence," spoke Miss Barbara, hastily.

His lordship turned and bowed, still with that little shade of formality, but with an expression of respectful admiration which could not be misinterpreted.

"Miss Lloyd must understand very well that I have enjoyed such music as that, and she must know, equally well, that I should no more dare to ask for farther favour than if St. Cecilia herself had entranced us with such witching strains."

"Perhaps you sing yourself, and will help me," returned Hester Lloyd, touched despite herself by his patient submission to her coldness.

"Oh, that will be charming! Kitty and I, between us, can furnish us a very respectable contralto. I know you sing, Cuthbert," cried Miss Barbara.

Unable to deny the fact, his lordship stood silent, waiting for a glimpse of Miss Lloyd's will.

That imperious lady opened the music-book, found her song, and commenced the prelude, upon which he walked quietly and took his place.

When the song was ended, Miss Barbara glanced



triumphantly at Hester Lloyd. Lord Cuthbert's voice was as superb as her own, and the two blended in a chord of perfect harmony.

Hester was surprised, and she could not help being pleased. What fine singer ever can resist the fascination of an accompanying voice, cultivated, and, above all, harmonising?

She turned over the leaves, and then made another pause, and began playing the air. Then, for the first time, she discovered that Kitty was all in a tremble of excitement, which she was vainly seeking to overcome.

"Why, Kitty, my darling, what is it?" asked she, in a voice of the tenderest solicitude, taking her hands abruptly from the keys, and putting them on Kitty's shoulder.

Poor Kitty had been doing her best to control her agitation before it was discovered, but she broke down now entirely, and dropped her face upon her friend's shoulder to hide the tears which came pouring down her cheeks.

"It is foolish—very foolish in me. I know it, but I cannot help it. His voice sounds so like—oh, so like! I could not persuade myself that it was not really Ross. Oh, my brother, my poor brother!"

Lord Cuthbert's face grew crimson, and was convulsed with agitation. He took a step forward towards the weeping girl, it almost looked as if his arms were outstretched towards her, but Hester Lloyd came quickly between them, and clasped Kitty to her heart.

"My poor darling! My dear little Kitty! then there shall be no more singing. No one shall be cruel to you. Do not weep so bitterly. Remember your brother's noble character, the pure record left behind, and think how much better and happier his loss must be than the living degradation of many lives."

She had not meant to be cruel. She had not thought of anything but Kitty's grief, and the wish to comfort her, but when she saw Lord Cuthbert turn hastily with a face pale as marble, and walk hastily out of the room, she perceived the hidden meaning he might have deduced from her speech.

Miss Barbara looked thoroughly discomfited, and not a little grieved, and Kitty, recovering in a moment, and quick to realise the situation, exclaimed sorrowfully:

"Oh, what have I done? I have spoiled all your pleasure, and never meant it—indeed, I never did! It was so foolish, and so wrong in me! Call him back, dear Miss Barbara, and let us sing again. I am sure I shall not be so foolish again. How disagreeable he must think me! Oh, do call him back!"

Miss Barbara looked quite ready to obey. She took a step towards the door, and then she returned, and casting a hesitating glance at Miss Lloyd, said doubtfully:

"Perhaps it is best to let it pass!"

Miss Lloyd stooped down, and looked earnestly into Kitty's face.

"Are you able to sing with us and be calm, Kitty?"

"Yes—oh, yes," answered Kitty with a little gasp of voice, something in the fashion of a chidden child.

"Then I will go myself and bring him back," said Miss Lloyd, electrifying them by the cool statement as thoroughly as if there had come a flash of lightning out of the serene blue sky smiling upon them from the broad windows.

"Hester Lloyd, I always knew you were the soul of generosity," exclaimed Miss Barbara.

Kitty looked up gratefully with her wet eyes. But Hester was already gone. She passed out hastily through the hall, and stood a moment on the verandah, glancing over the garden. He was not there, and she turned, instinctively aware that the shaded path, which led down to the little wildwood spot under the cool shadow of the pines, where the rocks were as mossy, and the brooklet stole as free a path, as if it were not within miles of a human habitation, would be the place to find him.

She went forward, as was her wont, gliding lightly and noiselessly, though with a free, majestic step, and came suddenly upon a scene which made her pause, with a strange blending of sympathy and suspicion.

There, prone on the mossy ground, lay extended at full length a figure, which could not fail to strike her, even then and there, as possessing something beyond the average symmetry and grace. The arms were thrown up around the head, the curly locks pushed back till their brown floss lay lightly against the velvety spray of moss, and so only a portion of the countenance could be seen, but the pallor of that, and the weary, wistful look of the close-shut lip, showed her that he was still suffering. She stood irresolute. Should she go forward and rouse him?

While she stood thus vibrating between her inclination and her judgment, he flung his arms out, and exclaimed passionately:

"Would to heaven I had died! Would, indeed, that the blue waters of that beautiful lake rolled peacefully over my slumbering head, even as it glides above his. It is no use—no use to try!"

A long, shuddering sigh shook his breast, and then the arms fell again, and the face was hidden in the turf.

"And I would be so good—if only I had this help, I would be so good—I would live so true and noble a life; I would put forth such herculean efforts to expiate the past by merciful, generous, and noble deeds. The world should be the better for my living—but for that—but for that."

Another silence, and still she stood there, alarmed lest a single movement, a rustle of her dress, the crackling of a twig, anything should draw his attention, and pain him with the knowledge of her presence.

But he never stirred, only she heard the long-drawn breath, the little choking sob at the throat. Now was her time.

She gathered the silken folds of her dress closely in her hands to save its rustling. She lifted her foot cautiously, and trod like a young fawn, but was spell bound again, transformed into a stony statue, fascinated to watch him, when he suddenly lifted his head, and set up, his back towards her, while flinging forth his arms half angrily, half entreatingly, he said in a low, but clear, distinct voice, every word ringing with passionate emphasis:

"Hester Lloyd, imperious queen, scorn it as you will, you cannot hinder the heart worship of the meanest slave. Oh, if you only knew what a regal mission might be yours! With your smile, with your help, I feel within me the power to rise above the life of common men. You have the power to make of me almost a demi-god, but because you refuse to give such gracious influence, you shall not send me cowering back into a slave, a beast. No, no, I will still fight bravely, as stoutly, and as tirelessly as I may. I will not be conquered! No, I will not!"

His voice had risen at the last words, half unconsciously it might be, nevertheless there was no care taken, for he had no thought,—how should he?—that a single mortal was nearer than the house.

Hester Lloyd's beautiful face was crimsoned, she felt a fiery glow stealing even to her finger tips. If she could only escape. She made another movement, a swift, and what was meant to be a noiseless rush, but as fate would have it, she stepped upon a dry stalk of withered fern, and it gave a sharp snap.

Lord Cuthbert turned around, and confronted her. Which countenance flushed and paled most rapidly could hardly be told, but it was his lordship who spoke first.

"You despised and condemned me before," he said, bitterly; "you will think me imbecile now, for I see by your face that you have heard my rhapsody."

For the first time in her life the haughty composure of the merchant's daughter was entirely routed. She stood abashed, silently gazing upon him, and searching vainly for the right thing to say.

He smiled mournfully, yet with a wondrous gentleness.

"Do not be troubled about it. It is very little more to bear, for me, I mean. Is there any way in which I can serve you? I am sure you do not need my assurance that I am ready to do it—anything, everything, even to something more trying than laying down my life, which is so useless a boon now. When you honour me so much as to ask anything, you know I am ready and willing to do it, if it lies in the power of man."

By this time she had recovered something of ease. "Yes," said she, "I came for you to come back and help us sing. Kitty is very much grieved at her unfortunate nervousness, and dear Miss Barbara is, I think, quite heartbroken at this first cloud in the sunny sky of Honeysuckle Cottage."

"She should not have kept me," he murmured; "I told her to send me back."

"Nay, we must not spoil her happy, generous plan. Will you please come back, and forget that there was any interruption?"

What a glow kindled on his pallid face. She saw, she knew what a thrill of ecstasy that gracious smile of hers brought with it, and though it annoyed her, she could not have been a true woman and not have felt a relenting compassion for him.

He rose at once, and came to her side, his eyes shining.

"For Miss Barbara's sake, I desire everything to be cheery and pleasant," said she, coldly, fearing she had granted too much.

"Certainly, I understand you, for Miss Barbara's sake. And for her sake, also, I will try to endure all this," replied he, putting on that stately dignity of manner.

Miss Lloyd blushed, and walked on hurriedly, and then she turned around and waited for him to come up with her.

"I think," she said, hastily, "we are like two children. Mere playing at friendliness will not cheat such sharp eyes as dear Miss Evesham's. While I am here, I am going to forget the past, and be really and truly friendly with you."

"The past," repeated he, slowly, "I wish I knew what you claim there for a personal injury."

She opened those great eyes of hers indignantly. "You read my letter!" exclaimed she, "surely you could not need any farther explanation."

"No," he answered, with a little shudder he could not explain, "I never read your letter. I saw it torn into a thousand pieces before my eyes, but I had not read a word."

"Torn to pieces!" she repeated, in utter astonishment.

"Aye, by a madman. The scene is stamped upon my memory for ever, and I cannot look back upon it without suffering. Do not ask an explanation, I beg of you, but let me say this, and believe me that I am speaking heaven's truth when I declare that I did not read your letter, nor did I write the one to which it was an answer. Miss Lloyd, I should have known better. I should have known that a man's hand must be as clean and pure to dare to reach towards yours as to seek to pluck a star from the heavens."

"You did not write the letter!" she reiterated;

"It was signed Cuthbert, Lord of Lyle."

"Nevertheless my hand never traced a single character in it. No wonder you are astounded, but I can offer you no explanation now. Believe me, when I am able, I shall vindicate myself from any charges of wrong-doing towards yourself. For the rest, heaven knows and sees how I confess my shortcomings and unworthiness."

Miss Lloyd was silent, her mind swiftly at work. In a moment more she fixed upon a plausible explanation. He had taken with him many wild and riotous companions. Some one of them, for a foolish jest, or madcap wager, had perpetrated the presumptuous letter which had so excited her indignation and resentment.

"Well," said she, looking up into his face earnestly, "I am glad you did not write that letter, Lord Cuthbert. I confess that I could never forgive its author. And now let us go in and sing."

Miss Barbara and Kitty were watching for them from the window, and both secretly marvelled at the bright colour, and rather nervous smile on Miss Lloyd's face. She did not, however, give them much chance for observation, but proceeded promptly to the piano, and began playing. Kitty, without a glance towards his lordship, took her place beside her. The first song showed the restraint and nervous consciousness of all parties, but this wore off as they took up another; and before the little concert ended, a general sense of ease and enjoyment prevailed.

"This is delightful," said Miss Barbara, "but we must take care not to spoil the pleasure by our indulgence. There is a pretty sketch and a poem on my reading-table. Cuthbert must take the one, and Hester the other. And it will be such glorious moonlight to-night, what if we take out the pony-carriage and go down to see how the little cataract, down at the glen, attires itself like a royal bride in a veil of silver. I have heard enthusiastic accounts of a lunar rainbow to be discovered if only the fortunate gazer takes the right position."

"That will be charming," said Hester Lloyd, upon which Kitty and Miss Barbara each gave her a grateful glance.

And so when evening came they set forth, Lord Cuthbert driving the ponies, with Miss Evesham on the seat beside him, and Kitty and Miss Lloyd behind.

The "Glen" was a romantic little spot, with a sheer, precipitous ascent, moss-hung, and at the summit pine-crowned, shutting it in on one side, while a closely-wooded hill rose on the other. From the rocks above poured a little cascade, which broke into clouds of spray ere it reached the narrow stream which wound between the two hills. A sort of cart-road led to the place, and at the broad space where it opened from the highway they left the carriage, and walked down a pathway arched overhead by interlacing boughs, and carpeted with moss and thick-straw pine needles. Such a sylvan retreat gains double enchantment in moonlight, and as our party entered, with noiseless steps, upon its peaceful silence, their light talk instinctively died away.

How profoundly peaceful it was! No sound broke the stillness, except the subdued patter of the falling water. Every rock, and tree, and leafy fern was defined as plainly as in the daylight, only there was a nameless solemnity in the brightness and silence, which seemed to come from some spell of enchantment.

"How beautiful! how beautiful!" said Hester Lloyd's rich, deep voice, as their echoless steps brought them to the little cataract, where a shower

of pearls seemed falling from beneath a veil of silver mist.

Kitty pressed her hand in sympathetic earnestness, but dared not trust her voice with irrelevant words. Miss Barbara was leaning on Lord Cuthbert's arm.

"Oh!" said she, "somebody think of some poem whose sentiments are pearls, and whose rhythm is like that tinkling water."

Hester Lloyd essayed to obey the request, but rebellious memory refused to aid her. Kitty likewise racked her brain in vain. And then when he had given them both time for precedence, Lord Cuthbert, in a low, hushed voice, recited just the harmonising poem needed. A long silence followed, a silence that was not gravity, nor yet excess of joy, but a sort of tender compromise between the two. Lord Cuthbert had brought Miss Barbara's extra shawl on his arm. He cushioned a flat rock with its soft folds, and seated her, and stood himself with folded arms close beside her.

Kitty drew her friend forward, and with her blue eyes fixed in dreamy awe upon the full silvery disc showing through the parting boughs of the trees, she whispered, timidly:

"Hester, do you believe a bad man could have repeated, or remembered that heavenly poem?"

Hester Lloyd sighed, and it seemed to her friend that there was an unwonted impatience in her voice, as she returned:

"Hush, Kitty! he will hear you."

Nevertheless, Kitty made another venture when they had advanced a little farther, and the merchant's daughter stood leaning against a tree, her white ungloved hands clasped, her eyes upturned to the moon, whose brilliant light shone richly over her face.

"Hester, didn't you like that poem? Didn't you think the sentiments grand and noble?"

"Yes, I always liked it. It is strange I did not think of it myself. But don't talk, dear. Somehow it seems foolish and irrelevant."

Kitty moved slowly back towards Miss Barbara and her devoted escort, and presently Miss Lloyd returned to them, and they all proceeded towards the spot where they had left the carriage.

"We must come again at noonday," said Miss Barbara, "and our little glen will present quite another aspect."

"I should like to bring my mother here," said Kitty, pensively, "she loves such wild-wood haunts, and is always fascinated with running water."

"She must come," returned Miss Evesham, promptly; "I suspect you are already home-sick, and I have planned that she shall have an occasional glimpse of you."

"My services as driver are at your disposal any time," suggested Lord Cuthbert, with a little eagerness of tone which did not escape Miss Lloyd, and she interposed dryly:

"I am a famous driver myself. I have it in my mind to coax Miss Barbara into trusting her ponies to my care."

He bowed respectfully, though a shadow came to his face.

"I have no doubt they will be secure under your guidance. They seem remarkably gentle creatures. Take care, Aunt Barbara, there is a stone in your path."

And for the rest of the way he devoted himself sedulously to the care of Miss Evesham, making no slightest effort to claim the attention of the younger ladies. Miss Lloyd was compelled to acknowledge to herself that she could not find the faintest cause of complaint in his conduct. It was the same when the next forenoon they drove over to the adjacent manufacturing town where Miss Barbara had, as usual, an earnest errand of benevolence. One of her protégés, a faithful fellow who had left her service to go to work in an iron mill there, had met with a terrible accident, and Miss Barbara must needs go herself to find out about his condition; and, after fruitless enquiries at his lodging-house, she begged of Lord Cuthbert to drive them down to the iron mill itself, to find out what had become of the poor fellow, and where he had been carried.

The great black chimneys showed out against the blue sky, and above the gently rippling surface of the river, with picturesque effect, and the young people were quite eager to make a visit to so novel a scene. Kitty begged Miss Barbara to take her with her when she went into the superintendent's office, and when there, made known, in her artless way, her desire to visit the wonders of the various departments, a wish the gentlemanly overseer was only too ready to gratify, as he glanced at her pretty and sparkling face.

She came flying out to the carriage where Miss Lloyd sat in stately dignity, trying her best not to be embarrassed by the silence of her companion.

"Oh, Hester, the gentleman has kindly invited us to go over the mill, and examine everything in it. I am

so delighted, for it is all a mystery to me. You will come too, will you not?"

"What, into those smoky, clanging, fiery rooms? No, dear, I beg to be excused! But don't let me hinder you, Lord Cuthbert. I will walk down the path there which leads to the water. How pretty it is! as blue and fair as if this black cloud of smoke was not continually pouring out above it. I will wait there till you all come out."

She rose from the seat as she spoke, and stepped lightly out from the carriage.

CHAPTER XV.

WHILE these quiet events were taking place in England, there was a certain episode in the monotonous life of a little brotherhood, whose monastery was perched in a craggy height overlooking the Lake of Geneva, which had a bearing of interest upon the life of all the parties of our story.

A queer, odd place it was, and the little band of brothers who claimed it for their home were fast dwindling down into a scantier and scantier circle. Father Leon had kept it hitherto in strict discipline and not uncomfortable circumstances.

Father Leon was the superior, and leading spirit; a man who might have ruled in the political world, or, mayhap, have wielded a powerful financial sceptre, but fate had led him into other paths, had tried him fiercely in his youth, and sent his still indomitable, but battle-scarred spirit into the peaceful seclusion of a cloister. But even there the energy, power and ability of the man revealed itself, and, though in a scanty fashion, found scope.

He had found the monastery ruined and poverty-stricken; the monks feeble-spirited and lukewarm. He went to work vigorously, and infused something of his own earnestness and enthusiasm into his companions.

Occasionally they had visitors; mostly curious foreigners, tourists at Geneva, who clambered up the rocky road, attracted by the picturesque look of the gray old ruin as they caught a glimpse of it from the Geneva road.

Father Leon, as was right he should, became their chosen superior, and their leading spirit. He brought back a little of the ancient prosperity, and gave the old decaying monastery a new respectability. But Father Leon's mortal frame could not keep pace with the indomitable spirit within. In the midst of his useful plans, and vigorous measures he was stricken down by a prolonged and incurable malady, and there was no one among the timid, self-distrustful monks to take his place. His cheery talk, his wise advice kept their spirits up awhile, and conducted matters, as far as oral directions could go; but from the very day of his prostration upon his narrow bed in the monkish cell, the affairs of the monastery slipped back to their old, loose, unprofitable way, and the spirits of the brethren declined in corresponding fashion.

The dying father was bolstered up in his bed, that he might be able to breathe, and speak coherently, not to add to his comfort. This, the bare floor, the iron bedstead, the hair pillow, showed was his lightest care. He could scorn luxuries, bear deprivation and pain, smile scornfully upon racking pains and approaching death; but for the life of the monastery his heart was racked with anxiety and solicitude.

"So bad as that, brother Anselmo?" asked he, sorrowfully, when the new leader had laid before him their desperate condition, and he turned his hollow, but still brilliant and piercing eyes from one troubled face to another of the little band, who looked upon him as a father and protector, and unerring guide.

"So very bad, worthy superior. It grieves me to distress you; but in this strait we are nothing without your advice and assistance. We can fix upon nothing for ourselves, and the prayers we have put up for heaven's guidance, and Our Lady's blessing almost seem to have fallen back upon us, without ever reaching the sky."

The bright, watchful eyes flashed over with sudden fervour of pious indignation.

"You will be heard; but shall not heaven take its own time for answering those who are so weak to help themselves? Dare you, any of you, to question anything except your own shortcomings? Shall heaven do everything and you nothing?"

The brothers stood with abashed faces, and bowed heads, meekly accepting the rebuke.

"Something must be done," said Father Leon, "have you kept at work upon the ivory crosses, and the jewel boxes?"

"We have used up all our material. And there is so much competition from the villagers below, the prices have gone down one half," replied Brother Anselmo, dejectedly.

The sick man made an impatient gesture with his thin, bony hand.

"Well, well, it cannot be helped, I suppose. But some of you should have looked ahead, and taken care to outstrip any rivals. Have you, any of you, any suggestions to offer?"

The monks exchanged furtive glances, and presently after one or two premonitory hints, Brother Anselmo spoke the united conclusion:

"We could only see a momentary relief, my father. Some of us believe that the hour has come when the silver crucifix might be taken from the altar, and a carved wooden or ivory one substituted in its place. We know well enough that plenty of rich churches stand ready to purchase—"

He paused, glancing questioning at Father Leon's face, and misinterpreting its pallor and gravity, he took courage to add:

"And we think, all of us, that the sick man who has so long shared our hospitality and care should be sent down to some of the towns below. He is not of our country. In our great strait it seems needless for us to be burdened with such an unprofitable member. We think we had better put him out! We only wait for—"

He paused abruptly, for Father Leon's ghastly face was turned towards him, quivering with fierce rage, the eyes fairly glaring.

"Oh, miserable wretches! Oh, degenerate brothers of a pious and Christian band! No wonder you are left to poverty, to humiliation, to disgrace!" he vociferated, between long gasps for breath, shaking his gaunt fist at one and then the other of the astonished and dismayed brethren. "What! despoil the altar of the treasure which was the gift of the sacred Pope, the treasure richer in holy memories than in silver! Rob the altar to save your poor enervated bodies a little longer from the dust where they belong! What! transgress the rules that were set and have been sacredly obeyed for a century; the rules set alike by heavenly and earthly authority, the holy duty of hospitality to the needy and forsaken?"

He fell back against the hard pillows, panting, and exhausted, writhing from head to foot in agony of body and anguish of spirit.

Not a word was spoken, though Brother Anselmo's cheek burnt hotly. They waited in silence until the paroxysm had ended, and the sick man lay, with ashy lips and closed eyes, scarcely able to lift his eyes or raise his hand. When he at length unclosed his eyes, a brother came forward and bent his ear to catch the feeble words:

"You will gain how much by the sale of the silver crucifix? Poor imbeciles! Only a few weeks' food and raiment—and what then? When the Judas money is gone—what then?"

The brother repeated the words slowly, aloud, that the others might hear.

There was no answer.

Brother Anselmo twisted nervously at the black wooden cross which hung on the rosary at his belt.

"I can tell you," went on Father Leon, gaining voice, and half raising his head; "I can tell you, you will have your own self-reproach, and heaven's curse to bear, and will stand once again face to face with the same foe. If you can only hold existence by such means, better die, every one of you, with me."

"We wish to abide by your advice, Father Leon," said one of them. "We know we are feeble and ignorant, all of us. You are still our director. Show us what to do, and we will not hesitate to comply."

"Leave the silver cross while there is a stone of the altar to which it was consecrated. Care as tenderly as lies in your power for the poor creature heaven sent to your gates. And work, one and all, at whatever honest work can be found, be the pittance ever so poor and small which your labour obtains. So shall heaven's blessing be upon you, and the relief shall come in a way ye cannot guess."

He clasped together the poor, weak hands, and stretched them out as in benediction.

"Go now," he added, authoritatively; "leave only Brother Anselmo, and I will discuss matters with him. But remember, all of you, it is my dying charge, that while you have a roof above your heads or a crust of bread, you will share both with this hapless unfortunate who has come so strangely into our gates. Your bodies can be scourged and mortified, and denied everything but the poorest subsistence; but your souls must have generous sustenance and holy fare. Go, my brothers, may the blessing of Heaven be with you!"

And, after a mute farewell glance at the superior so thoroughly venerated and beloved, they went out, and waited below for Brother Anselmo's report.

"Anselmo, my brother," said Father Leon, the moment they were alone, "my hours are few. Help me to rise; I must perform my last tasks with your help."

"To rise? Nay, holy father, that will be suicidal," remonstrated Anselmo.

"What matter if I hasten the last feeble sands?"

I have a duty to perform; I see that I have neglected it too long. Help me to rise. If need be, call another to help you guide my feeble steps. I must go to my inner cloister, and I must look again upon the sick man."

Too used to see the body tortured and denied to be much shocked at this proceeding, Brother Anselmo obeyed the superior's commands. He supported with his own strong arms the wavering figure, and fairly carried him into an adjoining cell, where lay stretched, pallid, emaciated, and unconscious, a youthful figure still, for all its sorry plight, full of manly grace. The features were fine, the hands and feet delicately formed, the whole appearance somehow suggestive of gentle blood and good breeding.

Father Leon, leaning heavily against Brother Anselmo's breast, felt this, as he looked long and silently upon the sleeping face, which was covered with a gentle perspiration, while the breath was soft and deep.

"I think, my brother, the man will prove to be a blessing yet. There is certainly a great change for the better since I looked upon him last. The fever which held the brain in such torpor has left him. His mind will return; he will explain all that is mysterious. Perhaps he will be able to reward you generously. Yes, I feel confident that he will be sane and remember all things. But if he should not, there is a slip of paper here in my missal which you must give to him. It contains the confession of Antonio, the fisherman; he who died so suddenly last week. He sent it to my care. It was he who brought the poor unconscious sufferer and left him at our gate. He found what he thought a corpse, and robbed it of money, and valuables, and then, as he was burying it, discovered signs of life, and half terrified, half angry, waiting for him to die, and finding that he did not die, the poor thief grew frightened, and at night he brought him secretly to our care, and lo! in a few weeks, his own death-blow came, and the thief he had committed, and the wrong deed weighed on his guilty soul beyond all the sins of his past life. Mysterious, indeed, are the ways of fate! Who knows who it will prove, this man whom our starving brotherhood has befriended? Brother Anselmo, I charge you keep him safely!"

"I will, holy father—ah!"

The monk uttered this last exclamation because the colourless eyelids of the patient suddenly fluttered upward, and a pair of wistful blue eyes were fixed wonderingly upon the strange pair at his bedside, vague and dreamy at first, as an infant's that wakens out of dimpled slumber, but both saw the grave intelligence, the startled consciousness creeping into them, as those peculiarly brilliant blue eyes went searching over the austere barrenness of the narrow cell, and came back doubtfully to the pair standing beside him.

"My son, be at peace," said Father Leon, soothingly, "your life has been mercifully preserved."

The young man stared in utter bewilderment.

Anselmo crossed himself hastily, and the superior looked shocked and horrified. Neither of them realised the strange picture they presented to the half-delirious youth, in their long serge garments, with their shaven heads and withered faces.

He made an attempt to stretch out his hand, but finding it an impossible feat, he paused in amazement, and fell to looking at the thin, wasted member in mingled perplexity and consternation. The mental effort was too much, and presently, with a weary sigh, he closed his eyes and went to sleep again.

"He will live," pronounced Father Leon, "but he will need careful and skilful nursing to insure a sound mind. Remember what I told you about the fisherman's confession. And now get me to the inner cloister. You will lay me in it, Anselmo, and go to my masses for my soul."

"What, leave you alone!" ejaculated the monk, even his penance-accustomed spirit horrified at the cruel suggestion.

Father Leon smiled with fanatic exultation. "Yes, I will mortify this miserable body even to the last minute of its life, and the greater glory shall await the triumphant spirit. Hasten, Anselmo, my limbs are failing. Leave me. Let masses be said to-night, and in the morning come to me."

Anselmo had too much respect for his superior's authority to refuse to obey. He did his best to assist the tottering figure, and laid it in that gloomy bed which was to be its last resting-place.

The poor brother went out reluctantly, and shuddered again as the heavy door clashed after him.

He found his brother monks clustered together in the vestibule, and in low, awed tones, whispered to them the commands he had received.

With the first glimmer of gray dawn, the trembling, exhausted band turned their steps to the inner cloister. It was Brother Anselmo who stepped tremblingly forward, and threw the light of his torch upon the white face, with eyes closed composedly,

and a sweet smile of peace upon rigid lips, marble pale hands clasped over the crucifix upon a pulseless breast—this was what he beheld.

He made the sign of the cross, lifted his eyes upward, and came back in silence.

Then the rigid discipline and austerity gave way. The poor grieving monks gathered around the cold, dead form, weeping and wailing.

"He is gone, he is gone, and we shall never see his like again!" they cried, dearly.

"He is a saint now," said Anselmo. "Perhaps he is looking down upon us. Let us remember his last commands and seek to win his blessing. Who has seen the sick man this morning?"

One of the number spoke eagerly.

"I watched with him the last of the night. He slept peacefully until near morning, when he awoke and heard the chanting in the chapel. He has strange fancies. I asked him his name, but he could not tell."

In two days longer, the patient had gained strength enough to retain his thoughts through slumber, and to be able to converse coherently. He was more ready to ask than to answer questions, however.

He heard Father Anselmo's story (for Anselmo was superior now) in silence, drumming absently upon his pillow with his thin, white fingers.

"And no one, you say, has inquired for me? You have heard no rumour of any inquiry?" he asked.

"None whatever," replied Anselmo, eyeing him keenly.

"Well, there is time enough for me to look after the matter when I am able to stir. Can you keep me a little longer?" he asked.

"As long as there is a crust. We promised our blessed saint that it should be so," responded Anselmo, fervently.

"I heard something about it from the other attendant. Tell me about him, and about your ways here."

Anselmo—a dreamy visionary—could tell stories better than he could form plans, or execute work. He did justice to the theme, and to his ideal of the saintly superior.

That wondrously bright blue eye softened over with a haze of tender emotion.

"It is a wonderful history. Can such things really exist, such willing, voluntary submission to hardship and penance for conscience's sake? Truly, human lives run widely apart," murmured he. "And so, though you fast yourselves, you are willing to share with me the slenderest pittance, good brother, is it so?"

"Even so, my son."

Very still and grave he lay there, one hand shading the blue eyes. But he smiled cheerily presently.

"I wonder if there is such a thing as coming up out of deep waters into light, and holding fast to it?"

Anselmo did not catch his meaning, and could only stare.

"Are my clothes here—the clothes in which I was found?"

Anselmo went to a chest, and brought them forth, putting the sodden garments within his reach.

"I want a penknife. I think I have strength to use it."

And when it was brought, he smiled again, languidly, to be sure, but with a certain vivacity, inherent with some temperaments. Stopping a moment from his fumbling movements, he asked again:

"And you are poor—all of you fairly hungering for nutritious food? And there is no help for it?"

"It is true. But he said, our sainted father Leon said, the blessing would come, and we will wait in faith."

"So it has. Come here; see if this is your blessing."

Father Anselmo came, with glittering eyes, and outstretched hands, a dizzy joy in his face.

The sharp penknife had severed the lining of the velvet vest, and out rolled a shower of golden coin.

"I have so much, at least, my good friend. Take it, it is for your good brotherhood; only keep me till I am able to take care of myself," said the stranger, and with a peaceful smile, turned his face to the pillow, and went to sleep again.

Anselmo rushed forth to his brethren.

"His blessing has come—Father Leon's blessing has come! Now are we sure he has become a saint!" And they gathered about him in silent transport.

(To be continued.)

A FINE young specimen of the herring dog has been caught off Blyth harbour.

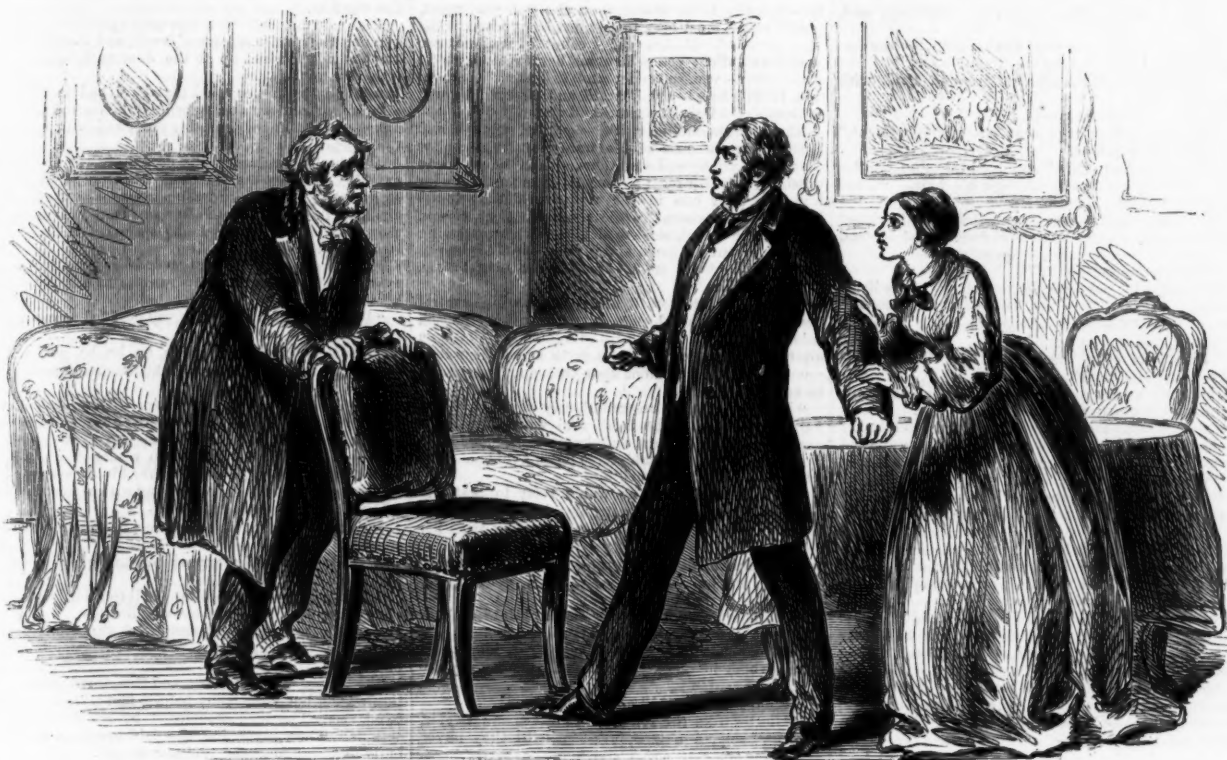
THE custom of chaining books to desks in churches is said to have originated from an act of Convocation in 1562, ordering that Nowell's Catechism, the Articles, and Bishop Jewell's Apology should be taught in universities and cathedral churches. But the custom has been traced back as far as Sir Thomas

Lyttleton, who by his will, dated 1481, ordered some of his works to be chained in different churches. St. Bernard, in 1163, in one of his sermons, actually alludes to some such custom.

REASON FOR ACCEPTING THE FIRST OFFER.—Every young lady is taught to consider marriage as the great and ultimate end of her life. It is that to which she looks forward for happiness, and in which she hopes to rival or excel her associates; and even the first to be married in a family or court is a matter of no small consideration. These circumstances plead eloquently in favour of the first lover who makes the dear proposal. The female heart is naturally kind and generous—it feels its own weakness and its inability to encounter singly the snares and troubles of life; and, in short, that it must lean upon another in order to enjoy the delights most congenial to its natural feelings, and the emanation of those tender affections, in the exercise of which the enjoyment of the female mind chiefly consist. It is thus that the hearts of many young women become by degrees irrevocably fixed on those whom they formerly were wont to regard with the utmost indifference, if not with contempt; merely from the latent principle of generosity existing in the original frame of their nature, a principle which is absolutely necessary towards the proper balancing of our respective rights and pleasures, as well as the regulation of the conduct of either sex to the other.

OUR FOOD PROSPECTS.—Our predictions have been verified even to a greater extent than we expected; for we find that the average price of wheat had declined at May Day, 1869, to 44s. 9d. per quarter, while the corresponding average at the commencement of May, 1868, was 74s. 2d. per quarter, showing that wheat is now nearly 30s. per quarter lower than it was twelve months since. The question which of course next arises is, what are the prospects of the future? and the answer is that they are excellent. The growing wheats generally present a favourable appearance in France, and when bread is plentiful in France it is cheap in Europe. In our own country, also, the appearance of the fields is encouraging, and, in the language of Mr. James Sanderson, "there is now the promise of abundant grain as well as green crops." Farther, the great sums paid for Hungarian wheat during the last two or three years have given an apparently enduring stimulus to Hungarian agriculture, so that the deliveries of wheat from Hungary may be expected to continue large. The extension of railway communication in Russia must favour the exportation of wheat from that country, while the contemplated abolition of the 1s. duty now levied on corn imported into the United Kingdom must have the effect of rendering foreign supplies generally 1s. per quarter cheaper. Everything, then, promises a continuance of cheap bread.

A ROMANCE IN REAL LIFE.—We (the *Birmingham Gazette*) have just heard a capital anecdote, which our relations with the narrator warrant us in endorsing in every particular. Some eighteen months ago, two gentlemen—one young and the other middle-aged—were to be seen, not, as our friend G. P. B. James would say, wending their way up the avenue leading to a spacious hall, &c., but quietly taking an evening stroll into the neighbourhood of Temple Bar, where they encountered a damsel of the "period," of course, crying bitterly. The sympathies of the younger of the two were at once enlisted, but the elder, whose chivalry had been quite extinguished by long knowledge and experience of London "dodges," treated the affair as a hoax, and exhorted his companion to "come on." Our hero gallantly refused, and the two parted company, when the lady informed her knight that she had that day come to town for the first time in the company of her father, a Warwickshire clergyman, that they had repaired to an hotel, of which she did not remember the name, and that sauntering out to do some shopping, she had been absorbed by some novelty, and "missed papa," and consequently knew neither what to do nor where to go. The gentleman was placed in rather an embarrassing position. Of the truth of the lady's story he entertained no doubt; he soon discovered that she was a lady, and like a sensible man, he determined to do his utmost to set her right. Ordering a cab, she was soon conveyed to an hotel and located for the night, her rescuer appointing to meet her in the morning, convey her to Paddington, and despatch her back to Warwickshire. He did so, and a few days afterwards the genuineness of the case was confirmed by a visit from the clergyman, who after heartily thanking his daughter's deliverer for his kindness and chivalry, invited him down to the rectory, where the intimacy was renewed, and soon ripened into affection, which was consummated last week by the matrimonial union of deliverer and delivered. Moral: Never refuse help to a lady in distress if you can be sure she is a lady, and not an impostor, since by assisting her you may be entertaining an angel and a future wife unwares.



[PAUL'S LANDLORD IN DANGER.]

THE RIVAL SISTERS.

CHAPTER VI.

On the Monday following the Saturday upon which the disaffected mechanics were made prisoners, Paul Hamlin visited the station-house and conversed with them. He found that their thirty-six hours' acquaintance with prison walls had eradicated some of their erroneous ideas, and rendered them tractable, desirous of returning to their families, ashamed of their criminal intentions, and fully imbued with the idea that the path of honesty was the only right one to pursue.

Thankful that such was the case, and after giving them some good advice, which they received very kindly, Paul set them free, as he had the power to do, since he made no complaint—only requested the officers to detain them over Sunday.

With a lesson taught them which they were likely to remember, and with their appreciation of their comfortable homes vastly increased, the men left those prison walls, grateful to their deliverer, and determined to think no more of fashionable felony.

Paul, who was well acquainted with them, from the fact that they had been under his direction in the "shop" for more than a year, and until lately, had been steady, industrious, and honest—was assured that they would make good their word, and return to integrity of purpose, benefitted by their experience. He also—and pardonably—felt the calm satisfaction which always succeeds the performance of a good action, and hoped he had saved them from a life of crime.

A week had passed since the above incident.

During that time Paul had exerted himself to the utmost to procure employment. In many places they would have been glad of his services, if business would warrant it, but that, as they invariably replied, was "dull." Their sympathy was pleasant to receive, but not substantial as regarded the necessities of life, and as Paul turned away from place after place, and thought of his ill success, and his dear, patient sister, and the cold winter staring them in the face, he shuddered and sighed deeply.

It was evening, and in the little parlour sat Paul Hamlin and Minnie. Both were sad, for too well they knew their precarious situation, and that that worst of human foes—poverty—was holding its gaunt face before their terrified view.

As Paul gazed into the grate, he queried:

"Are those the last coals, sister?"

"Very nearly, Paul."

And she bent closer over her work that he might not see her quivering lip.

"Minnie."

"Well, Paul?"

"I believe I am to blame for this. If I had not visited the Leighs, it would not have happened."

"No, no, dear brother, not so; do not blame yourself, we shall have good fortune yet."

Though as she spoke, her heart seemed to fail her, for recurring to her mind came the words she had uttered to him on that night, which thus far had proved prophetic.

"You are a good sister," he replied, gazing into the sweet face, "and, Minnie, I fear that I have done wrong—that I have neglected you."

And he turned his head away, grieved to the heart.

She gazed upon him half-sadly, half-anxiously. It pained her to hear him reproach himself—he, who had taken the place of both father and mother to her, since their death—and advancing, she smoothed away the brown curls from his forehead, and spoke tenderly.

"Dear Paul, you must not speak ill of yourself. You have done all that man can do, and if the cruel hand of poverty presses us, it is not your fault; do not be downcast."

"But, Minnie, when I think that I spent five shillings for a bouquet a few days ago, and that you need it for bread, it makes me feel like a criminal."

And his head sank upon his hands.

"It was but the generous impulse of your dear kind heart—your love offering, Paul, and let its memory be held sacred. He who has thus far protected us, will not permit us to starve."

"I am not worthy of such kindness—such pure unselfishness! Oh, Minnie, I feel as if my love-dream had been a shallow mockery—a sin!"

"Nay, brother—dear brother, think not so! We cannot control our hearts, and He who commands us to love, will not punish us for loving."

He pressed her hand in silent gratitude, and for a few moments a painful silence fell between them.

It was indeed a dismal prospect to look forward to. To see nothing but approaching desolation; to know that if help did not arrive they would be homeless, houseless, penniless. And as the wind howled and moaned, and rattled the shutters, and the cold, cold storm beat ruthlessly against the windows, poor Minnie drew nearer to the grate with an anguished heart.

At that moment Paul glanced towards her, and reading the sorrow depicted on her face, he bitterly exclaimed:

"To see you thus, sister; to feel the accusing

knowledge that I have done it; to know that ere long you will be deprived of the necessities of life—it distracts me."

By a powerful effort she brought a smile to her face, and gently answered:

"Paul, the only thing I regret is your lack of fortitude; we must bear this world's trials calmly; repining only increases the soul's agony. Dear brother, trust in God!" and her eyes beamed comfort into his.

He gazed upon her in silent pride and wonder, and with a slight feeling of shame for his weakness; then clasping her to his breast, he murmured:

"I know it to my sorrow, sister. You have mother's firmness and gentleness, and I father's impatience and irritability. I hope no greater grief will assail me, lest I sink under it."

The words seemed to impress her strangely, and she gravely returned:

"And I pray God with all my heart, that you may not; for some things might be far worse than our present troubles."

"True, true," he repeated, "and yet, Minnie, I should not care so much were I alone; but you—you, my sister!"

She saw his excitement, knew well his impulsive temperament, and smiling faintly, quietly said:

"Be quiet, Paul, we will talk no more of it; there is doubtless a bright side to the cloud which hovers over us."

"You would comfort me—you, with your gentleness and kindness; and I am weak—I am a man!" and he broke away from her, and impatiently walked the room, while a look of mortification settled over his features.

She seated herself and remained quiet, now and then glancing upon him with a look of loving solicitude.

Presently Paul started.

"The bell rings, sister; who can it be?"

She arose, went to the door, and presently returned in company with a tall, slim gentleman, who nodded patronisingly at Paul, glanced scrutinisingly around the apartment, slowly proceeded to divest himself of his overcoat, and then gradually lowered himself into a chair, as though fearful of injuring himself by rapid motion.

It was the landlord, and Paul wondered why he had come, while a vague fear stole into his mind, and with impatient apprehension he waited for him to speak.

Minnie bent more closely over her work, and now and then glanced anxiously towards her brother, while her eyes sought the face of the new comer with a look of timid inquiry.

At last, as the suspense became annoying, and Paul was about to ask him the object of his visit, the sharp

featured gentleman coughed, moved uneasily in his chair, and then looking up very suddenly, said, abruptly:

"Hum, I believe you were discharged from the employ of Mr. Leigh about a week ago?—ha!"

"Your supposition is correct," replied Paul, with quiet dignity.

"Hum, no business now, hey?"

"It is true; I am at present out of employment," he half-sadly rejoined.

"Yes, yes; bad affair," mumbled the slim gentleman, running his hands through his hair. "I am sorry for you, Mr. Hamlin."

His tones were so significant, that Minnie raised her eyes with a quick glance of fear. Paul seemed to share her thoughts, for he quickly asked:

"To what do you refer?"

The other looked towards the young girl, as if unwilling to speak before her, but seeing that she did not understand him, he indulged in a few prefatory grimaces, and then returned:

"Hum, you were discharged from the station-house, last Monday?"

In Minnie's brown eyes shone dismay; her work fell from her grasp, and she sat motionless.

As that word fell on Paul's ear he leaped to his feet, a bright flush mantled his cheek, fire flashed from his eye, and advancing, he angrily exclaimed:

"What do you mean, sir? You insult me!"

"Insult, hey?" repeated the long person, smirking maliciously. "Don't put on airs, young man."

With a muttered oath, the enraged youth darted towards him, when Minnie sprang to her brother's side, and holding him back, soothingly said:

"Dear Paul, heed not his words, I implore you; I know where you were!"

"But this base slander!" he exclaimed, furiously.

"I can endure poverty; but no man shall falsify my character! I charge you, sir, speak, and tell me the author of this lie!"

"Slander," mumbled the landlord, retreating as the vigorous form towered above him in its might; "I—yes—I really hope it is a slander. I do, upon my word!"

"Hope, sir—don't you know that it is?"

"No—yes I mean—at—that is to say, that I haven't the least doubt of it!" crouching behind his chair, and holding tremulously to the back.

"Then, sir," continued Paul, more quietly, as he resumed his seat, "your business here?"

Apparently thankful of the change in Paul's manner the landlord answered:

"Well—I come to inform you, sir, that your rent must be paid in advance."

Minnie's grasp upon her brother's arm grew firmer, as if with sudden pain.

Paul hesitated a moment, while many and harrowing thoughts disturbed his mind, then with as much composure as he could command, he queried:

"Your reason for this? I have never before been requested to do so."

The man shook his head.

"That may be, sir; but as I now request it, I suppose you are ready to pay me for next month?"

Minnie's face grew pale, and she sank into a chair at her brother's side.

Paul played nervously with his watch chain, and then, raising his eyes, quietly replied:

"Unfortunately, I am not prepared."

The landlord arose, took a paper from his pocket, passed it to the young man, and then, while a hard, cold smile flitted across his features, he bowed his head and left the room.

As they heard the outside door shut, the brother and sister by one impulse gazed into each other's faces, while the sad thoughts which occupied their minds were reflected upon their features, and they looked at each other in vain for one spark of hope. For a moment a painful silence was preserved; then, vainly endeavouring to make her voice cheerful, Minnie said:

"Read the paper, Paul."

With unsteady fingers he opened the document, cast his eyes over the contents. He clenched his fists, set his teeth, and walked up and down, with his head bent upon his chest in deep sorrow.

"Brother—tell me—what is it?" and she stayed him in his walk, and gazed sadly, pleadingly, into his face.

"Minnie," and the voice was husky, "it is an ejection notice."

For a moment those dread words sent a chill to her very heart, then calling forth her fortitude, she answered:

"Never mind, dear brother; something can be done."

He turned towards her, with a grateful smile, but one that showed he placed no dependence upon her words; then, as the tide of thought again rushed through his mind, inundating it with bitterness, he exclaimed:

"And at last it has come to this—no home—no shelter—and the bleak winter upon us; and you, sweet, gentle sister, must bear this—must be exposed to the keen air—and—oh, heaven! I cannot, I will not see you thus suffer; you whom mother adored me to watch over—you, so tender and delicate! Oh, heaven, it will break my heart!" and his eyes burned with mingled light of sorrow and anger.

She gazed upon him with fear, pity, anguish and love. Fear, because of his want of patience; pity, that he, so young and ambitious, should be so early crushed; anguish for their mutual grief; and love for him, the only one in the wide world that loved her. For a moment, while these emotions surged through her breast, she stood silent; then throwing her arms about his neck, and placing her face close to his, while the tears trembled upon her long lashes, she murmured:

"Dear, dear brother, do not look so wild—control yourself! Oh, Paul! I beseech you bear this affliction calmly. Look at me, Paul, and remember that you are the only one on this great earth whom I can lean upon—think for a moment upon that, and for my sake be tranquil."

"It is you, sister," he tremulously rejoined, "that I think of, and can I be indifferent when I see your eyes dimmed with tears, and know that, had I done as you begged, this would have been avoided. Oh! what a selfish being I am!"

She had feared that he would refer to that, and could only reply by fondly stroking his hair, and gazing upon him, her unselfish love beaming from her features.

At that moment the bell rang with a loud noise.

"Ha!" exclaimed Paul; "another emissary of grief," and darted to the door.

As Minnie heard his words she sank into a chair, and, with new fears, awaited his return.

In a moment he re-entered, bearing in his hand a letter, which he quickly tore open, and eagerly devoured its contents.

"Well, Paul—well?" gasped his sister.

"A letter from the law firm of Graves and Taylor, and, probably, a new oppression—will they never cease?"

"Do not look on the dark side, Paul."

"Ah no! but where is the light side?" and, with haggard face, he paced the room.

Minnie spoke not, but her heart seemed slowly breaking as she gazed upon her agonised brother.

CHAPTER VII.

SLOWLY Sunday passed away amid much care and sorrow. Paul was not blessed with the power of self-control, and poor Minnie's task was indeed a hard one, in bearing her own weight of grief which laid heavily upon her heart, and at the same time endeavouring to soothe his perturbed spirit, and quiet the tremor in his breast.

At last Monday came, and, with many misgivings, Paul made preparations to visit the law firm of Graves and Taylor.

"Paul, do not be sad—at least, govern your expression, that your friends may not perceive it," counselled Minnie.

He drew a deep sigh, and replied:

"I will endeavour to, sister; but I fear new trouble, and when I think—"

"Hush, hush, Paul," remonstrated Minnie, "can you not speak without recurring to our misfortune—repeating will not better our condition."

"You are right; you are nobler than I am, sister; now kiss me, and let me go."

She pressed her lips to his, bade him be of good courage, and then re-entered the little parlour, and threw herself into a chair. She could conquer her emotions in the presence of her brother, but now that she was alone, and the thoughts of their dread situation rushed across her mind, she buried her face in her hands, and wept bitterly. A half-hour passed, and still her head was bowed, though her weeping had ceased; she had relieved her spirit of a portion of its burden, and was now offering a silent prayer to the Power above.

Calmed, comforted, and a sweet, tranquil smile brought to her kind face by the divine influence which her heart-felt petition had evoked, Minnie went about her simple duties, with spirits regenerated, and her trust reposed in Him who "tempereth the wind to the shorn lamb."

So absorbed had she become in her work and pleasant thoughts, that she noted not the passage of time. Chancing to raise her eyes to the clock on the mantle, she saw that it was near eleven, and started, with a little exclamation of surprise, as she thought how quickly the time had flown.

Her reflections now returned to Paul and his mission, and she became somewhat anxious as she thought of the time he had been gone. Another half-hour passed and Minnie's solicitude increased,

while ever and anon she glanced expectantly towards the window.

Presently her reflection was very rudely broken in upon by the clatter of horses' hoofs, and the next instant a hack dashed up to the door with headlong rapidity.

A fear arose in her mind that Paul had met with an accident, and was being brought home, and acting upon this, she leaped from her chair and ran towards the window.

Ere she had arrived at the centre of the room, the outside door opened and closed—then quick, ringing steps—the parlour door crashed open—a gust of cold air flew in—and the next instant Paul dashed into the room, his face flushed and smiling, and his eyes beaming brightly.

Ere she could speak or recover from her astonishment, he clasped her in his strong arms and pressed kiss after kiss upon her cheek.

"Paul, why so excited—oh, tell me?" she managed to ejaculate.

"Minnie, darling, why I—ha, ha, ha, ha, oh!" and throwing himself into a chair, he laughed immoderately.

Minnie stood gazing upon him in apprehension, doubt and love. She almost feared that he had received some sudden shock which had unstrung his nerves. Yet that did not seem reasonable, and in tantalising suspense, she waited for him to speak. At last she could bear it no longer, and with almost painful earnestness, exclaimed:

"Brother, by your love for me, I conjure you—speak!"

He paused, saw the expression, and grasping her hand, joyfully shouted:

"No more, my darling sister, shall the cloud darken your brow—no more shall tears bedim your sparkling eye; but your voice shall enrol sweet songs, and your heart shall be as light as love and riches untold can make it!"

She looked upon his face, and the dread supposition which, but a moment before, had arisen in her mind, seemed to be corroborated by his words and actions. Then advancing, she laid her hand soothingly upon his forehead, and murmured:

"Calm yourself, and tell me candidly, quietly, what has occurred!"

"No wonder that you think I am crazy," he merrily answered; "I am almost ready to believe it myself. But seriously, Minnie, I have met with unexpected good fortune."

"Have you found employment?" were her next words, spoken a little hopefully.

He laughed.

"Employment, Minnie? yes, any quantity of it, and light work at that."

She hesitated a moment, and then replied:

"I am so glad, Paul; but I cannot account for your strange enthusiasm."

He gazed upon her with a peculiar smile, and then observed:

"If you wish to ride, Minnie, get your wraps."

She regarded him in astonishment.

"Hidde, what mean you?"

"There is a dictionary that will tell you; but, aside from jesting, I desire you to assume your best garments with all possible haste, and then follow me to yonder carriage."

"Oh, Paul, I fear you—"

"No, I'm not insane, I assure you; haven't the most remote idea of becoming so."

With her mind doubting and perplexed, and her heart fluttering with excitement, she ascended to her room, attired herself for riding, and then returned to the parlour, where Paul welcomed her with a glad smile, and then escorted her to the carriage.

The word was given, and, at a rapid rate of speed, the horses dashed over the pavement. Street after street was traversed, and, with each succeeding step, Minnie's wonder increased.

"You think I am acting very strangely," quoth Paul, "and almost fear that I am not in my right mind? Is it so, sister?"

"I am certainly puzzled to account for your words and appearance."

"You will probably be more so; all I have to say is, enjoy everything and don't be troubled."

As he spoke they entered a fashionable street, and presently drew up before a stately edifice, of old, though fine appearance.

Minnie turned her eyes inquiringly towards her brother, but he only laughed.

In a moment the steps were let down, and after assisting his sister to alight, Paul conducted her up the stone stairs, opened the door very unceremoniously, and entered the house.

As Minnie looked around; saw the mosaic floor; the artistic carving of rosewood and mahogany; the grand, wide hall, and all its rich appointments; she sighed, and turning to her brother with astonishment depicted upon her features, asked:

"Are you showing me this to make me discontented with our little home, for the short time that we have to remain in it?"

"Come upstairs?" he rejoined, smiling quietly, and ignoring her question.

Like one in a dream she followed him, and when he opened the drawing-room door, and introduced to her delighted vision its high frescoed walls, its rich drooping lace curtains, its velvety carpet, and elegant furniture, she almost gasped for breath, so great was her admiration, and once more she said:

"Dear brother, let us go; I am sick at heart."

"Nonsense, Minnie."

And throwing back the folding-doors, he revealed to her enraptured gaze another room equally as large, and furnished in the same manner, with the exception of a grand "Steinway" piano which occupied the centre.

"There, sister," he observed, referring to the instrument, "sit down, and see how you like its tone."

With her wonder increasing at each word, she seated herself at the instrument, and in a moment the room re-echoed to the dulcet and harmonious sounds which her fingers, like magic, drew from the keys.

Raising her tear-glistering eyes, she said:

"Oh, Paul, it revives memory of days long past, and yet it is pleasure, it is so long since I have played."

"Then you are satisfied with it," he carelessly returned. "I always like to suit you."

The large brown eyes opened very wide, and rested searchingly upon him.

He took not the least notice of her inquiring glances, but proceeded, very leisurely, to remove his coat; then seating himself in a large stuffed chair, he remarked:

"Come, sister, remove your shawl and bonnet."

"What for—?"

"Well, you are growing brighter every day; that is an interesting question; it is not customary or comfortable to wear a thick shawl in a warm room, is it?"

"But, Paul."

And she stopped, for her growing amazement could find no language in which to express itself.

"Now, Minnie," he continued, as she laid aside her bonnet and drew a chair near to him, "you are doubtless, in a maze of bewilderment, but do not be more so, when I tell you that—"

"Well, Paul, go on!" she interrupted, in tones of breathless interest, and much annoyed at his slow manner of speech.

"You are impatient, Minnie; but to proceed; this house, its furniture, the land it rests on, is mine!"

"Yours, Paul?"

And she stood trembling before him, while many emotions perplexed her mind.

"Yes, dear; have you no word of greeting?"

She gazed about her—the veil of bewilderment which had obscured her senses with joy and incredulity, was raised, and in a tide of happiness, the welcome realisation flooded her heart, and lightened her mind; then sinking into his arms, she murmured:

"Thank heaven, for all it's goodness!"

And the warm tears of joy crept from her eyes, and dropped softly upon her brother's cheek.

"Now, Paul, tell me from what source this magnificence has flown?" she requested, as she resumed her seat.

"From one, at whose hands one could expect nothing but hardness and cynicism."

And he thereupon gave her a graphic account of his acquaintance with the miser, and the incidents connected with it.

"But I am still in the dark as regards your possession of this property," she remarked, as he finished. "Please be more explicit; do not keep me in suspense."

He smiled at her earnestness, and answered:

"When I arrived at the office of Graves and Taylor, I was shown into a private apartment, where the senior member of the firm was awaiting me. I noticed that his manner was more than polite, and partook of that fawning deference which men invariably bestow upon the possessors of gold. I asked him to state his business, and he immediately informed me of the death of the miser, and his bequeathal to me of all his property. I could hardly believe my senses, but managed to maintain a calm exterior, and coolly asked the amount. His answer amazed me, for it was—"

"Oh, do not be so slow, Paul, proceed!"

"You will be more astounded when I tell you that it was two hundred thousand pounds, not in securities on railroad shares, but in gold!"

Minnie drew a very long breath, and clasping her hands, looked thankfully into his face, and merely said:

"Go on."

"I immediately expressed a desire to purchase a house, when Mr. Graves told me of this, and stated his price. It was so very low that I immediately closed the bargain."

"How is it that it is all furnished?" asked Minnie.

"This house," continued Paul, "was built and furnished by a gentleman who was unfortunate enough to fall, just as it arrived at completion and he was about to make it his home. There, darling, my story is ended—can you believe it?"

"Hardly, Paul," she mused; "it seems like a beautiful dream."

"Thank Heaven, it is not!" he fervently returned. "But can you imagine who lives in the house opposite?"

"I cannot; unless it be Mabel."

"You are right," he joyously exclaimed. "Now Minnie, my path is clear, and I can hurl back Henry Leigh's scorn in his face, and what is better, win my Mabel."

"But you are a mechanic yet, Paul, and he will not swerve from his position."

"You dear credulous child," he said, smoothing the shiny hair from her brow, "know you not the potent power of gold, that will make kings of beggars, princes of fishermen, and change men's ideas and purposes, even as the wind shifts the vane?"

"Perhaps you are right, Paul," she immediately responded.

As the last word trembled on her lips, an attendant entered with a letter.

Paul received it, smiled at Minnie's astonishment at the rapidity which had been displayed in procuring *attachés*, and then proceeded to read the communication.

As he perused the missive, the light of scorn flushed in his eyes, his lips curled back, and he contemptuously ejaculated:

"My prophecy has proven true; listen, Minnie, and hear my former employer's words addressed to gold:

"MR. HAMLIN.—Dear Sir,—I trust you will pardon my words, which I repented of as soon as they were uttered. I am very hasty, and oftentimes am obliged to make a humiliating confession of it. I trust that this will place us upon the footing of friends. Hoping I shall see you and your gentle sister at my house very frequently, as we are now neighbours.—I remain yours, with greatest respect, HENRY LEIGH."

"It is all a fabrication," he bitterly exclaimed; "all a stroke of policy, because I am rich! Bah! how I hate such servility; if it were not for Mabel I would never darken his doors again!"

"Forgive and forget, Paul," whispered Minnie.

He glanced kindly towards her, and then taking her hand led her over the house and inspected its beauties.

Paul Hamlin was happy. That night as he lay upon his couch sweet visions greeted his senses, and in all their phases, the most enchanting and beautiful portion was—Mabel Leigh.

(To be continued.)

CITY MEMORIAL OF THE PRINCE CONSORT.—At the last Court of Common Council it was resolved to place a stained glass memorial window at the western end of the Guildhall, to the memory of Prince Albert. There is also reason to believe that a statue, the gift of a private individual, will be erected.

An American contemporary says fish may be kept alive for ten days or more without water by filling their mouths with crumbs of bread saturated with brandy, and pouring a little brandy in their stomachs, after which, in this torpid state, they may be packed in straw. They become alive again in a few hours after being placed in fresh water.

An immense collection of goods stolen from the trains of the London and North Western Railway by a gang of Bangor thieves has been found in the house of a Bangor tradesman named Hughes, hitherto supposed to be a respectable man. The floors of this man's house were found full of watches and jewellery. Both he and his wife are in prison whilst investigations are being made.

A curious little sign of the times occurred on Thursday, Ascension Day, in the Committee-rooms of the House of Commons. From time immemorial it has been the understood rule that the House should attend prayers at St. Margaret's, and that Committees should not sit till two o'clock in the afternoon. This year only two committees out of a large number adhered to the ancient tradition! Such a thing has not been known within living memory! Where are we drifting to?

A BEAUTIFUL RELIC OF ROMAN LONDON.—An important discovery was made a few days back in the course of the excavations for the new street

which will shortly run from the Embankment to the Mansion House. Between Bucklersbury and the Poultry, at a depth of about twenty feet below the surface soil, a large and elaborate Roman pavement, roughly estimated by those who saw it at about eighteen feet square, was laid bare. It was in a good state of preservation, and was a fine design, though rather pale in colour. It was unfortunately found necessary, from the state of the works going on round about it, to cover it up before it could be properly investigated, but we hope that this has only been done as a temporary measure, and that we have not seen the last of this beautiful relic of Roman London. Excavations in London are always sure to produce plenty of antiquities, real or of Birmingham make, as the case may be, but anything so fine and complete, and at the same time so unmistakably genuine, as this pavement, was more than could be reasonably hoped for.

THE MANUFACTURE OF MUSTARD.

In the preparation of mustard, the seed is first crushed between iron rollers, and then pounded in smooth iron mortars, each about one foot in diameter. These mortars are arranged in a single row, near the walls of some of the rooms, and the crushed seed is pounded in them by large iron bulbs, which are worked by machinery. Each bulb is attached to a long wooden rod, which is raised a few inches by an arm projecting from a rotating shaft, and then falls by its own weight.

Several scores of these automatic pestles and mortars soon reduce the crushed seed to the condition of flour and bran, of a dark, dirty colour, in consequence of the non-separation of the seed. The flour and bran are then separated from each other by means of silk sieves. Eight of these sieves are placed loosely inside a large square horizontal frame of wood, suspended by chains at each of its four corners. Violent eccentric motion is given to the wooden frame, by means of an iron rod passing down its centre, and the sieves have an additional motion of their own in consequence of their being loosely fitted in the frame.

In one room alone there are nine of these frames at work, carrying altogether seventy-two sieves of various degrees of fineness. The finer the sieve, the more does the mustard improve in colour, and the husk is thrown aside to be made into manure cake for the land; two kinds of seed are thus treated, the brown and the white; the former being much more pungent than the latter, and the two descriptions being mixed to suit the public taste.

ERASMUS WILSON, F.R.S., has presented to the Royal College of Surgeons the sum of 5,000*l.* together with a fine collection of drawings and models, for the endowment of a professorship of diseases of the skin.

M. EDGAR QUINET, the eminent French writer, who has lived for seventeen years in exile, has refused to stand as a candidate for Paris, though invited to do so by an influential body of the electors. His primary objection is an unwillingness to take the oath of allegiance to the Emperor.

In consequence of the many complaints which have been made of the annoyance and obstruction caused by persons driving velocipedes on the pavement, a general order has been issued to the metropolitan police, calling attention to the 5th and 6th William IV., cap. 50, sec. 72, which makes it unlawful to drive a carriage of any description on any foot-path or causeway.

DRIVING A YOUNG HORSE.—In teaching a young horse to drive well, do not hurry to see how fast he can trot. Keep each pace clear and distinct from the other; that is, in walking make him walk and do not allow him to trot. While trotting, be equally careful that he keeps steady at his pace, and do not allow him to slack into a walk. The reins while driving should be kept snug; and when pushed to the top of his speed keep him well in hand that he may learn to bear well upon the bit, so that when going at a high rate of speed he can be held at his pace, but do not allow him to pull too hard, for this is not only unpleasant, but makes it often difficult to manage him.

THE LONGEST RAILWAY IN THE WORLD.—We learn from America the completion of the Pacific Railway, by which New York is joined to Sacramento by a railway across the entire breadth of the American continent—a space of 3,000 miles! The engineering difficulties of the line were comparatively small; though the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada, had to be passed. But there were vast tracks of desert, where the Indians, with an instinctive dread of the undertaking, were constantly attacking the labourers and wrecking the trains, until it

was as much as 10,000 workmen, supported by a large body of troops, could do to preserve the works from destruction. Amongst other consequences of this great undertaking will be the bringing the Mormons more closely into connection with their fellow-citizens: with what result, it is difficult to foresee.

WHAT CONSTITUTES LUGGAGE?—An interesting argument has taken place in the Court of Queen's Bench with reference to the word "luggage." What is a person entitled to carry during a railway journey free of charge? The article in dispute was a rocking-horse, forty-four inches long, and weighed 78 lbs. Mr. Justice Hayes facetiously asked whether it was put in a horse-box. Mr. Justice Hannen referred to "Richardson's Dictionary" and found that "luggage" was "anything of more weight than value," a definition that caused some amusement. Mr. Justice Hannen suggested that the rule might, perhaps, be laid down thus—that the passenger was entitled to have anything which passengers usually or generally required for their personal use or accommodation on a journey. It was finally decided that a rocking-horse was not "luggage."

THE PROPHECY.

BY THE

Author of "Oliver Dared," "Michel-deer," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXX.

VIOLET, in her riding skirt and cap, with a long dark plume floating over her shoulder and mingling with her radiant hair, came forward, smiling brightly, and, as she offered her hand to Mrs. Whitney, said:

"Here we are again, dear madam."

Mrs. Whitney drew down the smiling face, and kissed the speaker tenderly.

"I am sure your visits are returned, for Rose and Aubrey spend at least two days in every week at Melrose."

"Rose and Aubrey feel as near me as if they were really my sister and brother."

Harry was looking at Aubrey while Violet thus spoke, and something in his expression gave him the first intimation that there was more than fraternal affection in the young man's heart for the fair companion who made the brightest sunshine of his own home. A feeling, not exactly of jealousy, but of extreme annoyance, arose at this conviction. He had been so much accustomed to consider Violet as a part and parcel of his own life, that the idea of another seeking to win her away from him was distasteful; though until this moment he had never thought of appropriating her exclusively to himself. With Violet for his companion in his hours of relaxation, it had never come to him to reflect on what his life would be if this golden strand were taken from it, and interwoven with that of another.

While these sombre thoughts passed through his mind, the others were gaily chatting together. Violet had taken off her riding skirt and hat, and placed herself in a large chair near an open window commanding a view of the lawn and the village in the distance. Aubrey drew an ottoman to her feet, and sat down upon it. His devotion to her from childhood had been so open, and his attentions so frankly rendered, that Violet had come to accept them as matters of course; and she did not suspect that they had any deeper meaning now than they had possessed when they were children together. She looked at his finely formed head, and said:

"Oh, Aubrey, I have had a present sent to me, and I have not the slightest idea who was the donor. It is a picture of Tasso reading aloud 'Jerusalem Delivered' to Leonora d'Este; and you, as you sit there, remind me of the poet. I declare, the turn of the head and the contour of the brow are wonderfully like."

"There are two things in which I should be sorry to resemble him, Violet; in his slighted love, and his shattered mind. The first may be my fate, but the last I do not dread. It is too fearful a price for any man to pay for the boon that was denied him."

"And one of which a boy such as you should never dream," said Violet, lightly, though there was something in the tone of his voice that jarred on her, and she wondered what he meant by gazing at her with such an expression in his eyes.

"Why do you call me a boy? I have a man's stature, a man's feelings and aspirations, and maturity does not depend so much on years as on the natural strength of intellect."

She blushed slightly, laughed, and said:

"Then you are a very precocious personage, Mr. Aubrey Whitney, and I begin to be half afraid of you."

But Aubrey was not to be diverted from his purpose; and Violet was quite unprepared for the words that came thronging to his lips with such fervid utterance

that, for a few moments, she found it impossible to stop them. When he paused, almost breathless, she gently said:

"Would that I could have foreseen and prevented this, dear Aubrey. You are my friend—my brother, and I will try to forget, as you will, that you ever wished to be more to me than that."

"But, Violet," he gasped, "I adore you—I—"

"Stop; I entreat—I command you to cease using such language to me. It will only put us farther apart, and I wish still to regard you as a dear friend, Aubrey. As children, we have dearly loved each other."

"Is there no avenue by which I can reach your heart, Violet? Is it closed against me, and all I can urge in support of my suit?"

"It is open to any profilers of friendship from you, Aubrey; but love is interdicted. You may laugh at all this some day."

"Laugh!" repeated Aubrey, in a tragic tone. "You may laugh at the boy who has shrined your image in his heart of hearts; but that passion has made him a man, capable of feeling the most intense throes of passion, jealousy, and despair. I love you as I shall love no other woman while I live; I shall not go mad, as Tasso did, or cause you to regret the influence you have had upon me. I am but a boy, as I have been told many times to-day, and I was silly enough to think I had the right to address so peerless a creature as you are with vows of love. We are friends, and nothing more. I accept that as your final decision."

She put out her hand to him, and said:

"You are generous and noble, to forgive me the pain I have unintentionally caused you, Aubrey, and I thank you for it."

"We will be friends, Violet; and I can even forgive the rival who will, at a future day, claim from you the love that is refused to me."

When twilight was falling, Aubrey went in to his anxious mother. She silently kissed him, and he only said:

"I am going away to-morrow, mother."

"It will be best so, my son. I have every confidence in you, Aubrey. This disappointment will not make you reckless, or unmindful of those who truly love you?"

"No, mother, it shall not. I will come up to the standard you have erected for me, or die in the attempt."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE evening was deliciously calm; the sky a canopy of golden light from the rays of the departing sun, as the two young equestrians mounted their horses to return to Melrose.

The two rode on in unusual silence, till half the distance between Clifden and Melrose had been passed over. The last flickering sunlight slanted through the trees that grew on either side of the road, and the moon was raising its broad silvery disk over the hills, to light them on the rest of the way to their home, when Harry drew near to his companion, and laying his hand upon her bridle rein, checked the speed at which they had hitherto ridden, and said:

"Violet, I sue to you for what you alone can give—the sunshine of a happy and contented lot. Until to-day, when I fancied there was a chance of losing you, I did not know that you had become to me the one fair spirit without whose sympathy and companionship my life will be a failure. The jealous pang that rent my heart when I read aright the feelings of Aubrey Whitney, gave me the first insight into the state of my own. I love you, Violet, and wish to make you my wife before your unknown relatives can interfere between us."

Violet listened with flushed cheeks and fluttering breath. She turned her face from the searching gaze that was resting on her, and with difficulty said:

"This is very sudden, Hal. Until to-day, neither you nor I have thought of loving each other in this way. It came to me like a revelation that we might do so; but it seems very strange that—that we have gone on blindly for so long a time. I wonder if such a preference as we feel for each other can be the one true and lasting love that will become a beacon light throughout all our lives."

"I believe it is; I am sure of it, Violet. If that is your only scruple, cast it to the winds, for I am sure that I love you with that entire fullness and appreciation which leaves me nothing to desire, either in you or myself, on that score."

She looked at him now, and there was something almost divine in the light that shone from her lovely eyes, as she said:

"Who knows whether this mystery that envelopes me may not be discreditably? But people are certainly among my kindred, and they may possibly prove infamous. Think, Harry, what you risk in asking me to become your wife."

"No stain can fall on you from the evil conduct of others. You are lovely, perfect in my eyes; and I

ask you to allow me to stand between you and those who may seek to take you from me. Let them be what they may, it matters not to me."

"Dear Hal, do you believe that this decision will never be repented? Are you quite sure that your parents will approve of the offer you have made me?"

"I am quite sure of myself, Violet; I perfectly understand my own feelings and wishes with reference to you. I should not have spoken as I have done, if I had not reason to believe that both my father and grandmother will be but too happy to claim their pet and darling as a daughter. I love and trust you, Violet; can a man say more than that to the woman he woos to his heart as the companion of his life? I await your answer, and I know that you will be perfectly frank with me."

Violet was deeply touched; the tones of his voice expressed even more than his words, and to her they seemed more fitly chosen than any to which she had ever listened.

He laid his hand on hers, and impetuously said:

"Answer me one question, Violet, and I shall be satisfied. Do you love me as I do you?"

"I do love you. From my childhood, you have been my king, Harry Melrose, and now you are my conqueror."

"You need not hope to evade me now, my fair bride, for after your confession I have the right to call you such. Let us pace slowly along in the heavenly moonlight, and try to realise the 'sober certainty of waking bliss,' before we present ourselves at Melrose to ask the blessing of our parents on the engagement we have made."

She timidly said:

"I am not your plighted wife yet, Hal. You carry everything by storm in such a way that I have no power to resist you. Until papa and grandma have ratified our love-making by a cordial consent to accept the deserted waif as their daughter, I cannot consider anything you have said as binding upon you."

"My dear girl," he gravely replied, "do not attempt to be generous at the expense of all that is dearest in life to both of us. I will not accept freedom, for you are necessary to me; you have unconsciously woven yourself into every fibre of my being, until the thought that another might win you from me was as a thunderbolt to me, when it came to me to-day. Till then, I was stupidly blind to the truth; but now that I know it—now that I have won from your lips the confession that I am dear to you, I would die sooner than give you up."

"Oh, Hal," she impulsively exclaimed. "You make me proud to be the chosen of so loyal a nature."

"And I am equally proud to claim my heart's darling as my very own, and present her to my father as my chosen wife."

When they reached Melrose, supper was waiting for them, and the old lady was walking in the long piazza, leaning on the arm of her son.

She was saying:

"I am afraid that Harry will never know his own mind, before someone else steps in and cuts him out. Violet is too lovely not to attract admirers; and although he values her so highly, I have seen no evidences of love on either side. And I see no way to keep her with us if others claim her, unless Harry marries her."

"If he does not voluntarily offer to do so, mother, we cannot very well urge it upon him," replied Mr. Melrose. "He has reason to know that we shall not object to their union, though I have said nothing to influence him. I would not attempt to bring two people together who have not found out for themselves that they will be happier thus than apart. If those who have so long abandoned Violet come forward now, and insist on taking her from us, we shall be forced to submit, painful as it will be."

"Father! mother! welcome your daughter. We have at last found out that we love each other, and we have come to ask your blessing on our union, and your consent that it may be solemnised without any unnecessary delay."

The old lady, beaming with smiles and gladness, said:

"Harry, I offer you my warmest congratulations on the wisdom of your choice."

Mr. Melrose drew Violet from Harry's embrace, and kissing her tenderly, said:

"I take you to my heart, my child, and thank the Giver of all good for bestowing on my son that whose price is above rubies—a faithful and true wife. You have been a treasure to us, Violet, and we prove how highly we value you, by accepting you as our daughter. The sooner the marriage can take place, the better it will please both my mother and myself. Bless you both, my children, and may your happiness increase as years roll on."

Violet's head sunk upon his breast, and she faintly murmured:

"Oh, papa, how good you are! I shall love you more dearly than ever from this day forward."

"My dear child, your presence beneath my roof has been a joy and happiness to us all; to give you up to others would be a bitter trial to me, and I cannot express my satisfaction at what has occurred. It has long been my most ardent desire that Harry should woo and win you for his bride, Violet."

"And mine too," said Mrs. Melrose, as she drew the golden head to her own breast. "I have trained you for my own Harry; but I began to fear that he was too blind to see how charming you are."

"If I have been blind, I am wide enough awake now," said Harry, with a ringing laugh.

Violet turned to him with a smile of perfect love and trust, which spoke more eloquently than words. Harry drew her hand upon his arm, and in his quick, impetuous way, went on:

"I shall be uneasy until you are mine beyond recall, for we do not know what the sender of that picture may be plotting against our happiness. Let us name the day for our marriage at once; it is my wish that it shall take place next Thursday week."

"Oh, Harry, that will be scarcely two weeks hence," cried Violet in dismay. "I—I could not get ready in that time."

"What is there to get ready, Violet? Not your heart, for that you have confessed belongs to me. You can order what you will need for the wedding and get it in time; and you can have everything you want after we are married."

And so the matter was settled.

When Mr. Whitney was alone with his wife, he said:

"It is lucky for Harry that no time will be lost before his marriage takes place, for I had a letter from Mr. Boyle two months since, in which he says that the aunt of Violet is about to return to her native land, after sixteen years, and she hopes to be able to claim her niece, and introduce her into society. I hope she will be safely married before there can be any interference, for I think those who have cared for Violet all these years, have the best right to her now."

Mrs. Whitney listened to this piece of news in dumb astonishment; but she presently found voice to ask:

"And you have kept this to yourself all this time. Have you given no hint to Mr. Melrose?"

"How could I, my dear? Lawyers are bound to keep the secrets confided to them in the way of business, and although Mr. Boyle is not exactly a client of mine, I felt that I had no right to betray his confidence. I thought it time enough to speak, when something certain was decided on; and I did not wish Violet's mind to be unsettled by learning what might possibly happen to her. I can wish no brighter fate for her than to become the wife of Harry, and I shall be as silent as death on this subject till they are safely married. Her husband may then look into her claims, and if she is entitled to a fortune, I hope he will be able to establish her right to it."

"I really think Mr. Melrose should be told. Indeed it seems hardly fair that Violet shall be kept in ignorance of what so vitally concerns herself. She is very young, and a season of gaiety is so attractive to most girls, that she might prefer going to her relations."

"You reason like a very worldly little woman, my dear. If I believed Violet to be so commonplace a girl as to put the lot Harry offers her in comparison with what you call a season of gaiety, I would tell her what I know, and she might choose whether she would accept a tardy recognition by those who cast her off, in preference to the sure and happy future opening to her."

"Now they have made up their minds to get married, the young people seem determined to have no unnecessary delay. Rose had a note from Violet this morning, asking her to be her bridesmaid, and Thursday week is the day appointed for the wedding."

"I believe you are correct in your estimate of her," said Mrs. Whitney. "And discussing Violet brings Fantasia to mind. Has Mr. Ashford ever drawn upon you for the interest due to his daughter on her share of Mr. Falconer's legacy?"

"Of course he has—or rather his agent for him. Catch Ashford allowing money he can control to lie in the hands of others. Until Fantasia was of age, the interest was allowed to accumulate; but as soon as she gained the power to act for herself, she claimed all that was coming to her, and as I had no authority to withhold it, her little fortune was paid over to the bank in which she requested it to be placed. That was done three years ago, and from that time I have heard nothing of her except through the newspapers."

"She has forgotten all about her poor mother's friends; but we cannot blame her much when we remember how young she was when she was taken away by that bad man and thrown into a sphere of

life so different from anything she had been accustomed to."

"It seems strange, and almost incredible that the little girl we knew so well should have become so distinguished in the calling to which her poor mother was so bitterly opposed. I am afraid that some judgment will come to her yet, for deserting the parent who was so devoted to her as to die of a broken heart, when the dreadful truth became known to her that her child was gone, without even a farewell word. Poor Laura! my heart aches now, when I think of all she endured."

"If Fantasia had not been Ashford's true daughter, she could never have dealt such a blow to her unhappy mother. We find that punishment is dealt out to those who are guilty of crimes the law cannot reach. If I were not a believer in revealed religion, that fact would convince me of the existence of a higher power, which 'shapes our ends, rough-hew them as we will.'"

"Yet if her mother is permitted to become her guardian angel, no evil will come near Fantasia," said Mrs. Whitney, softly.

"I have taken some pains to find out whether she went after Claude Benton's death, for I have never forgotten our promise to her mother to befriend her, in case she should ever need assistance. Within a year after she wrote to me, I saw the account of the manager's decease in the papers; at the same time it was stated that he left a considerable fortune, the greater part of which was distributed by will among the actors who had helped him to accumulate it. Fantasia had a bequest. As Ashford managed the business, I have my own opinion as to who was benefited by the transaction; for he would have no more scruple about cheating his daughter, than he had in defrauding his wife."

"And where is Fant, now?"

"The last I knew of her she was in London—engaged as a star with a high salary; but the papers spoke ominously of a decline in her powers, and she was advised to accept a lower range of characters than those she has hitherto so successfully sustained. It is not wonderful that this should be the case, for precocious genius rarely matures into anything remarkable."

The conversation ended here, and Mrs. Whitney remained in deep thought till Rose came to consult her as to the dress she must wear as Violet's bridesmaid.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE rolling years had brought about the revenges of fate. Ashford was a broken-down old debauchee; Fantasia's genius had waned and she could no longer command an engagement; and they were both living along with Mrs. Peck—Fantasia's old friend—in ordinary lodgings in London. Ashford having just become convalescent, after a severe illness, showed every disposition to return to the dissipations which had caused his sickness. Remonstrance with such a man was useless, but Fantasia could not always refrain, and when he impatiently and sharply rang the bell that stood upon the table beside him, she came from the adjoining room, and gravely said:

"You are not thinking of going out again to-day, father? You will risk a relapse if you do, and the doctor said that would be fatal to you."

In a thick, harsh voice Ashford at last replied: "I am not only thinking of it, but I am going to do it. I do not care the snap of my finger for the croaking of the doctor. When I was down and could not help myself, he had his way; but I am well again, and I mean to have mine now."

"Of course you will do as you please, sir; you always do that without regard to others," replied Fant, with some asperity, and the lines between her brows deepened as she spoke. "If you fall ill again, I warn you that I shall give you up to a hired nurse."

"If I am properly attended to, I don't care who officiates; but I am not going to be an invalid any longer. I have an appointment that must be attended to, and as you are concerned in it, you should not oppose my wish to go out this afternoon."

"If you go out on my account, you may spare yourself the risk, sir; for nothing can serve me now. My sceptre has departed; never again shall I wield the magic power of genius over listening thousands ready to applaud me to the echo. The goddess is but a commonplace woman now; her power, her glamour, her all, swept into one common ruin."

The voice gradually arose, and the last words were pronounced in a tone of such bitter, concentrated despair, that even Ashford, stoical as he was to any suffering but his own, was moved.

"That is all nonsense, Fant. You are under a cloud now, as you were once before in your life; but it will pass away, and leave you brighter than before."

Fantasia uttered a short, bitter laugh.

"No, father, my career is ended; my memory is

gone. I have no more confidence in myself, and success is not won without that. Such talent as I possessed was forced into too early bloom, and the flower has perished before it reached maturity."

"Don't talk such maudlin nonsense as that, Fant, or I shall think you as great an idiot as your mother was before you," was the brutal reply.

"Ah, my mother!" sighed the girl, with an expression of intense pain. "Would that I had resembled her in all things; for she was one of the pure and good of this earth. When I think of her, and how I left her to die alone, I feel as if the punishment that has fallen on me is even less than I deserve."

"Hum! Now that there is nothing else left for you, I suppose you mean to turn sentimental. That course will scarcely strengthen the bonds that bind you and me together."

The cynical sarcasm of his tones stung Fantasia, and her eyes flashed on him as she replied:

"The bond of which you speak may be rent or suffered to fall asunder, sir, if it proves burdensome to you. I will withdraw from your control the little that is left of my earnings, and seek some means of support in the obscurity into which my once brilliant prospects have sunk. Our paths cannot long run together, for I cannot afford to allow the few thousands I can yet call my own to be recklessly squandered at the gaming table."

Ashford glared on her a moment, and then hissed through his closed teeth:

"What am I to understand by that demand? Who has told you that your money is hazarded at the gaming table? I am not yet quite a dependent on your bounty."

With a bitter smile, she retorted:

"I am quite aware of that, sir; and unfortunately for you, I know how those funds were obtained. It is enough for me to say that I submit to be robbed by you of the legacies left me by those who were better friends to me than you have proved; but I will not submit to be quite impoverished by you."

"What do you mean by that?"

Fantasia steadily replied:

"I have examined all your accounts. I have long wished to know how we stood with regard to each other, and I embraced the opportunity of ascertaining what I wished to know while you were not in a condition to oppose me. It was my right; and I learned from my investigations that my confidence in you has been shamefully abused. I shall not expose you; the fraudulent transfer to you of the stocks purchased with my money may go unquestioned, for I know I could only wring justice from you by an appeal to the law. Disgrace that falls on you would reflect on myself, and I do not forget that you are my father. Take the spoil you have so ignominiously secured, but you shall leave the remnant of my own earnings. Fifteen hundred pounds are still in the Bank of England to my credit, and while you lay ill I took such measures as will prevent you from drawing farther supplies from that source."

Ashford listened to her in dumb rage. He brought his clenched fist down upon the table with great violence, and at length found voice to say:

"The stocks are honestly my own, purchased with the last remnant of my fortune, and I always meant to share them with you. You are my child—why should I care for money but for your sake, Fant?"

The girl sighed, but a disdainful smile carved her red lips, as she slowly said:

"It is very strange that stocks purchased for me in the same railroad are represented to me as valueless, when I find that you possess ten thousand pounds' worth of them, on which you draw a per centage. As to your paternal regard for me, the insatiable Moloch to which you have devoted your life has devoured that, as it will everything else that is dear to man. Honour, truth, respectability, have long since been offered up at the shrine; and honesty, good faith, and fatherly affection are the last stakes to be risked. You have played your last game with me, Mr. Ashford, and from this day our interests are divided."

With a malicious twinkle of his eyes, her father scornfully said:

"It is very ungrateful in you to quarrel with and accuse me in this unfeeling way, Fant; for I have thought of nothing but you, and the means of reinstating you in your old position, since I have been strong enough to plan and provide for our future. I am almost sure that I can secure a profitable engagement for you, if you will only consent to accept it."

Fantasia shook her head doubtfully, and her brow again contracted.

"I have passed through that ordeal, and I will not consent to brave it again. I know my doom, and I submit to it."

"Pooh, child! you have played the part of a heroine so long, that you forget what commonplace realities we have to deal with. That pitiful sum in the bank is no fitting provision for you. I can show you how

it can be added to, till you can retire from the stage with at least a competence."

With this she retired from the room, and closed the door of communication. Ashford heard the lock turned, and knew that farther remonstrance was interdicted. He bit his lip with rage and annoyance, but he fully understood that his daughter would submit to no farther imposition from him. She had little of her mother's yielding temper, and in their encounters he rarely came off the victor.

He sought for his hat and gloves, muttering: "I wonder if she would have listened to me, if I had told her that the manager offered twice as much as I named? It's no use; if I told her now, she would know that I meant to appropriate half her earnings myself, and she'd rage at me worse than ever. It's cursed luck that Benton should have made a fortune by her, and that she should break down just as my turn came. I wonder if that carriage is never coming."

He was about to ring again, when the door opened, and the maid appeared. Ashford brushed past her before she could speak, and in a few moments was whirling away in an open brougham, in the direction of the park.

(To be continued.)

THE total cost of the Abyssinian expedition is now estimated by the Government at 8,770,000*l*.

OFFICERS OF THE INDIAN ARMY.—A correspondence on the subject of supersession of officers of the Queen's army by junior officers of the Indian army has been published. It would seem that colonels of 1863 are being promoted in Madras, whereas colonels of 1855 are still unpromoted in the Queen's army. There can be no doubt as to the necessity for removing this anomaly. Any disparity in the system or rate of promotion in the two armies must necessarily lead to jealousy. The officers of the old East India establishment, have clearly grounds for consideration, but this must not be allowed to outweigh the claims of the officers of her Majesty's service, which are founded on right and equity.

DUCTILITY OF GOLD.—Fifty or sixty years back a workman made two thousand leaves of gold from 18 dwts. or 19 dwts. of gold; now, by better skin and skill, he is enabled to produce the same number from 14 dwts. or 15 dwts., showing a considerable reduction in the cost of produce, and, as may be expected, a deterioration in the quality of the article. One grain of gold beaten between skin can be extended to some 75 square inches of surface, the thickness of which will be 1/367650th part of an inch. These figures represent what may be done. What is done for the purpose of trade is somewhat less, namely, 56½ square inches per grain, 1/280000th of an inch in thickness. To give an idea of its thinness, it would take 120 to make the thickness of common printing paper, 367,650 sheets of which would make a column half as high as the Monument.

PORTUGUESE WOMEN.—The position of woman in Portuguese countries brings one nearer to that Oriental type from which modern society has been gradually diverging. Woman is secluded, so far as each family can afford it, which is the key to the Oriental system. Seclusion is aristocracy, and if it cannot be made complete, the household must do the best they can. Thus, in the lowest class, one daughter is often decreed by the parents to be brought up like a lady, and for this every sacrifice has to be made. Her robust sisters go barefooted to the wells for water; they gambles unprotected into the lonely mountains; no social ambition, no genteel helplessness for them. But Marquilha is taught to read, write and sew; she is as carefully looked after as if the world wished to steal her; she wears shoes and stockings, and an embroidered kerchief, and a hooded cloak, and she never steps outside the door alone. The sisters will marry labourers and fishermen; Marquilha will marry a small shopkeeper or the mate of a vessel, or else die single.

THE WOODMAN'S BAROMETER.—The oak is getting into fine foliage, whereas the ash is quite bare, and this circumstance is an indication of a fine dry summer. Had both trees presented the same appearance as regards foliage, the chances are that the ensuing season would have been neither particularly wet nor dry, but cold and unproductive throughout. A few selected cases will tend to strengthen, if not to confirm, the observation. In the years 1816, 1817, 1821, 1825, 1828, 1829, 1830, 1833, 1840, 1845, 1850, and 1859 the ash was in full foliage more than a month before the oak, and many of our readers will recollect the cold and unproductive seasons which succeeded. Again, in 1831, 1832, 1839, 1840, 1853, and in 1869 both these species of vegetation began their race at about the same period, and the summers which followed were neither one way nor the other. What a in 1818, 1819, 1820, 1822, 1824, 1825, 1826, 1827,

1833, 1834, 1835, 1836, 1837, 1840, 1842, 1846, 1854, and 1868 the oak displayed its umbrageous foliage weeks before its companion of the forest, and these years were particularly distinguished for fine, dry, and warm weather, and subsequently by the most abundant harvests recorded in the annals of our country.

GOLD IN SCOTLAND.—We have just learned that gold has been discovered in the bed of the River Cassley, on the property of Rosehall, belonging to Sir James Matheson, Bart., Lord-Lieutenant of Ross-shire. The Kildonan and Suisgill diggings still continue to attract attention, and diggers are coming forward daily to take out licenses. The majority of the diggers continue to work on the Kildonan burn. The Duke of Sutherland, on his last visit, agreed to allow a few of the Kildonan miners to prospect and survey the ground lying between the county boundary and the Helmsdale river, to ascertain whether richer gold deposits existed than those at present worked. A few experienced hands were selected, and did a few days prospecting; but the permission has now been withdrawn, and no proper report has been given of the survey.

PHYSICAL POWERS OF ENDURANCE IN THE GREEKS.—The cooks gathered sticks, lit a fire, and prepared our usual mid-day meal—tea with a slice of lemon in it, Russian fashion, where milk was not to be had—a dish of cutlets or fried eggs, bread and honey. Our dragoman-in-chief spread the table and served as waiter; and the horses were left to graze under the eye of the two agoyates, Pericles and Alcibiades. The rigid abstinence which these two observed—in spite of the heterodox example of their elders—did not seem in the least to impair their strength and activity. They had been six hours on foot without breaking their fast, and after all, they broke it with nothing stronger than bread and olives, their constant diet for six weeks before. The most stalwart Englishman would have broken down under such a regimen. All the nations of Southern Europe—Spaniards, Italians, Greeks—endure privations much better than northern nations; a fact which must be borne in mind when, in the history of ancient Greek warfare, we read of armies marching longer distances in shorter time than would be possible with French, or German, or English troops, even without a train of artillery. Our troops require more elaborately prepared food, and more of it. The "food for three days" which an old Greek soldier carried in his knapsack would scarcely serve a modern English soldier for one day.

HUGH WARING.

JOSEPH HANNAFORD was an old young man. Care and responsibility had come to him early in life, for he was not more than sixteen when his father died, and left his mother and his young sister to his keeping. There was property enough for them all, to be sure; but it was chiefly in land and stock, and needed Joseph's vigilant superintendence to make it profitable. This superintendence he gave faithfully and willingly, and never once complained that to do so forced him to resign sundry secretly cherished personal ambitions of his own. But all this responsibility wrought its own work upon his nature—made him provident, thoughtful, calculating, thrifty—precisely an old young man.

This state of things continued for ten years. Then his sister married, and removed to the next town. His mother desired to accompany her, and was only prevented by the difficulty which attended obtaining a suitable housekeeper for Joseph.

You perceive, therefore, that at twenty-six Mr. Joseph Hannaford was just in a position where marriage became convenient and desirable. Otherwise, I rather think, he was quite too well-disciplined to have cherished any idle fancies or importunate longings.

Whether, before this epoch, he had ever suffered any transient thoughts to wander in the direction of Miss Carrie Fay, who had been growing towards her sweet womanhood not very far away from his door, I cannot conjecture. I only know that about this time he began to discover that her eyes were blue, and her hair golden, her cheeks were flower of the peach, and her lips blossomed with a sweetness which he longed to taste. He told her these things in some discreet fashion of his own, and she—he was her first lover, and the right of discovery has gone for a good deal in all ages.

Everyone said he was making a great mistake. The neighbours thought they knew what he wanted a great deal better than he himself did; and were sure that a good, strong, thrifty girl, used to working and saving, would be just the one for him. Carrie was pretty, and fanciful, and dainty. She was a orphan; but an uncle, who had no children of his own, had

kept her from feeling any sense of loneliness or desolation by his constant and fatherly kindness. Under his roof she had grown up to seventeen years, and at that period the young man came along, and wooed and won her.

Her uncle felt sorely uncomfortable, for he understood just what Carrie was better than anyone else did; and he knew that it would be no easy matter to make a working-bee out of a golden-winged butterfly. But, on the other hand, Carrie was evidently in love with her suitor; and Mr. Hannaford was certainly well-to-do—quite able to marry to please himself, and make his wife comfortable in her own way afterwards.

So, in due time, the wedding took place, and Carrie Hannaford went away to her new home, where, before very long, a change came over the spirit of her dream.

She had begun by first idealising, and then adoring her lord and master. He was, certainly, well-looking, in a kind of regular, massive way. His face had in it not much suggestion of sentiment. His eyes were clear and shrewd, though kind; and his lips were firm and rather thin. He knew beauty when he saw it, but he would never be ruled through his senses. His features were well-shaped. There was power in his face. He was a man who knew how to say "no" to himself and to others. There was manly vigour and symmetry in his well-knit frame; and in short, he possessed a good many of the attributes which go to the making up of a girl's hero. But Mistress Carrie reckoned without her host when she proposed to make a post-matrimonial lover of him.

He evidently did not believe in connubial love-making. Philandering, as he called it, was not to his taste. Courting was very well in its way. It had not been without its shy delights, even for him. But they were married now, and it was time to settle down, and begin life as they could hold out. Their wedding day was in September; and when the late October winds blew away the sapless, withered leaves, Carrie felt as if her hopes, which had blossomed so fairly, were blowing with the leaves, and withered as they, down the wind.

She was a conscientious, well-intentioned little creature, and she tried her best to put aside all these feelings, which she taught herself to believe were morbid and ungrateful. She was constantly striving to justify Joseph, making little pleas for him at the bar of her heart. He was nine years older than she; it would not be natural for him to have so much romance. Of course he loved her; why else would he have married her? What a goose she was to expect of a big, strong, busy man the little softnesses which belong to and delight women. Then she would try to be brave; make a pretty little toilette, perhaps; wear the dress and the ribbons he had praised six months ago; and meet him, her cheeks pink with expectation. Was he blind to all this—such an old young man that the sweet devices of youth had no longer for him any language? At anyrate, he made no sign.

How dull, and prosy, and commonplace were the long winter evenings which they passed together! They got through supper, and were seated before the fire in their little sitting-room, at six o'clock punctually; and there for three mortal hours they sat in unbroken quiet, he reading his newspapers through and through, and she watching him, and wondering whether life was to go on at this dead level for ever. Punctually as the clock struck nine, he would get up, light his lantern, and go his nightly rounds among cows, and oxen, and horses. Then he would come in and go to bed. It seemed to her that just up to that pass she could bear on silently; but as if then she must utter some outcry, or silence and constraint would choke her.

Once or twice she made some few forlorn attempts to better the condition of things—brighten them up, if possible. Once she planned the beguilement of a little supper. Having made all ready beforehand, while he was out upon his evening round, she stewed some oysters and brewed some coffee, fondly fancying her small feast would be a success; but the wise old young man would not see the fun. He did not believe in oysters at bed-time; they would disagree with him, he knew. As for coffee, he was sure a single cup would keep him awake all night; but if Carrie could take such things at nine o'clock, and not have them hurt her, he had not the slightest objection. So, with no heart to taste it herself, she carried away her little treat; and if a few tears cooled the coffee she had poured for him in vain, he, at least, was none the wiser.

Slowly the winter wore away—"the long, sad season of snows and sins." Birds came back from over the seas, and began to sing. Violets opened shy blossoms. Grass-blades sprang up greenly; and even Carrie Hannaford brightened with the brightening of nature, and began to remember that she herself was young.

One day in May, her husband came to her with the proposal that they should take a summer boarder. He put the matter in the most ungracious way, as is the matrimonial wont of precisely this class of men. As she would be having a servant girl anyway, he said—and he used, in saying it, a tone which made her feel herself a monster of extravagance—they might just as well have something to keep her busy; and this boarder who wanted to come, this Mr. Hugh Waring, would pay well, and make very little trouble. He knew this, because three years ago, in his mother's time, Mr. Waring had boarded with them for some months.

Of course, Mistress Carrie consented—for what could she do else?—and kept her own secret dissatisfaction with the prospect before her.

It only took Mr. Waring's arrival, however, to reconcile her to his presence. With his first deferential bow over her hand, she became his willing hostess. He was a person of such type as the young wife had never before, in her short, quiet life, encountered—a man of wealth and of leisure, high-bred, scholarly, and belonging to the ancient order of gentlemen. He was a handsomer man, too, than one often meets, with his clearly-cut features, his warm colouring, and the chestnut hair and flowing beard, which the eye matched.

He was not an old young man. Impulse was strong within him; discipline had not yet taught him discretion. When he felt strongly, he would speak strongly, and, perhaps act recklessly; but, under ordinary circumstances, he had the *aplomb* and the cool self-possession of a man of the world.

Very soon he began to perceive that to board with the Hannafords now was a slightly different thing from what it had been in the administration of Joseph Hannaford's self-contained mother and staid sister. Joseph Hannaford's wife was altogether another order of woman. It may be questioned whether she would have made any serious impression on him had he met her as Miss Carrie Fay. But, since her marriage, a soul-subduing pathos had grown into her look which somehow went to his heart. Perhaps, too, the strongest appeal which can be made to a man's chivalry, is the sight of a sad and disappointed woman, who neither parades nor confesses her misery.

Hugh Waring was not a bad man. In some respects, indeed, his heart and his life were purer and fresher than those of most men. He would not have added a feather's weight to the burden which had already borne so hardly upon her life. But he commenced by pitying her; and Love has been Pitt's neighbour ever since the world began.

He was tender and gentle to her as no one had ever been before. He was not too busy to notice the blush roses in her hair, or the blushes on her cheeks. If she liked a wild flower he had brought home, he made light of a long tramp to fetch her its kindred. While she sewed, he read to her,—while her husband was busy about the late "chores" with which a farmer fills up the summer twilights.

All this time, I doubt if he had thought of danger for himself or her. She, certainly, never had. Her delight was pure and sweet. She would have said, if anyone had questioned her, that Mr. Waring was her friend, the best friend she had ever had; but unquestioned, she did not say even so much as that to herself. She scarcely knew that it was summer with her heart, as well as with the year; or that the summer days were flying fast.

Nor did anything in the aspect of affairs make her husband uneasy. To do this young man, whom perhaps circumstances, rather than nature, had made old, justice, he was neither mean nor ungenerous. His confidence in this young wife of his was perfect. She loved him; she was his to have and to hold; why should he grudge her a few hours which someone else made pleasant after a fashion not his own? I do not think he was likely to lose anything by this generosity, or that any amount of suspicious espionage on his part would have served his own cause better.

There came at last an evening of revelation to the two who were going on so blindly; or perhaps it had come to Waring before. He had been sitting silently through the sunset, watching the play of the warm light on Mrs. Hannaford's fair face and golden hair. She looked wonderfully young and helpless, with her extreme delicacy, her appealing eyes, and her soft white dress, made as simply as a babe's and girdled with a blue ribbon. A languor, born perhaps of the summer heats, oppressed her. She drooped towards him, leaning her head upon her hand, and looking frail as a snow-wreath which a wind might blow away. Waring sat silently, as I said, and watched her, until the sunset lights had gone out of her hair, and a curious awe began to steal over him, as he saw her through the gathering shadows, white, and still, and unearthly as a spirit. Then, out of the semi-darkness, his voice came to

her in a sort of chant, too low and even to be a song:—

"Sweet is true love, though given in vain, in vain;
And sweet is death that puts an end to pain:
I know not which is sweeter—no, not I."

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
Oh, love! if death be sweeter let me die."

"Sweet love that seems not made to fade away—
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter—no, not I."

Her tears were falling fast before he had finished. A spell was upon her which she did not understand, and could not evade. Still, she kept silence, and waited for his words—words which, when they came, pierced her like a sword.

"Mrs. Hannaford, I think I must go away to-morrow. It is midsummer, and all the hay is down."

"But I thought," she faltered timidly, "you were to stay the summer through."

"So I should, if all things had been as of old. It is not good for me to be here under the new régime."

"I have tried," she began; and then she stopped. Her tears choked her. She could not go on, and tell him, in simple commonplace, that she had tried to make him comfortable.

"If you had done no more than you tried to do, all would have been well," he cried, his tones fervent with passion. "I saw you just as you were, and your husband just as he was. I saw how much it was in you to give to some man; how little you were even asked to give to him. God help us both, for I have learned to love you. I covet my neighbour's wife—I dare not stay here."

She said nothing; but he heard through the stillness the bitter sobbing which she strove to smother. It was more than he could bear. He crossed over to her; but he did not take her in his arms. Some shield of purity was about her which still held him away from her, though he was close at her side.

"Carrie," he said, calling her for the first time by her name, "I must go away to-morrow; but you shall go, too, if you will. Your love would be worth to me any sacrifice. What would mine be worth to you? You know just how much your husband cares for you. You have seen what life with him is. Do you think it would break his heart to lose you? I tell you, No. He would very composedly get a divorce from you, and marry more wisely next time. You would be free in a few months, and the moment you were free, you should be my wife. So help me God, I would deal honourably with you. Don't you believe me?"

He caught a low "Yes," murmured under her breath.

"Then will you come? I think I can make life a different thing for you from what it ever has been. You shall know what it is to be loved by a man with a man's heart in him. Will you come, or will you settle back on the old life, and send me away alone to curse the fate that ever brought me to the knowledge of you?"

He stopped, and then she could hear his heart beat in the silence. Temptation beset her sorely. How sweet this love would be of which he spoke—this love for which she had so hungered—this passionate, lover's love, which Joseph Hannaford would never give her. She had a temperament to which love was the supreme thing. It was her one idea of Heaven. But she had not gone far enough away from the innocence of childhood for her guardian angel to have forsaken her. Clearly, as if some human voice had spoken it, she heard a whisper, which came again and again, and would be obeyed—"Fray!" She got up at last, and saying to Hugh Waring nothing but "Wait," went away to her own room.

In the darkness she did not see her husband, who sat there in an arm-chair, too tired to care for a light, and waiting for her. He would have spoken, but somehow he felt the excitement of her mood, and was silenced by it. She knelt down, and tried to obey the voice. But she could not collect her thoughts, and only two words would come, over and over again—"Help, Lord, help!"

Vaguely, Joseph Hannaford comprehended that she was passing through the crisis of an agony such as he, in all his placid life, had never experienced or witnessed. Some intuition withheld him from trying to comfort her—made him feel how idle would be any consolation which he could offer; but when at last she left the room, he arose and stole softly after her. A deep, yearning tenderness for her filled his soul full. He thought he had never loved her half so well in his life; and what this trouble was which was breaking her heart he must know.

Downstairs she went, and into the dim room where Hugh Waring waited for her; and her husband stood just outside the open door, and listened breathlessly for her words. She spoke at first with a certain fever-

ish eagerness, as if she doubted her own strength, and must hurry through with what she had to say before it failed her; but, as she went on, a deeper and calmer earnestness grew into her words.

"Your tenderness," she said, "has made life very sweet to me. I never knew what it was before to have a friend who cared for the same things I cared for; and no one was ever so gentle to me as you have been. I did not know how much you were to me until you spoke of going away. I want love more than any other earthly thing; but I do not think this is love which we feel for each other. You pitied me because you saw that my life was a disappointment—that I was lonely, and unreconciled to my fate; but I do not believe you would have chosen me out of a world full of women, if you had found me free and happy. As for what I feel for you—but I will not talk about that—I have my duty to do. And I did love my husband first. If he had loved me in the way I once fancied that he did, I should have gone on feeling the same for him for ever. And I know I could love him even now, if he cared to be again my lover. In any case, I will be true to him. I will not make myself unfit to meet my dead father and mother again in Heaven. I do believe that you would be faithful and tender, but your best tenderness could not console me if I had lost for your sake my own soul; and I should grow old, and sad, and be a burden to you presently."

"I think not—I think never!" Waring cried, passionately. "Oh, Carrie! I could make you happy."

"Not in spite of heaven," she said, slowly, and then she turned away.

Standing still in the shadow, her husband watched her go upstairs, and then he stole noiselessly out of doors, for he was wise enough not to go to her.

What in him was really true, noble, and worthy of a woman's loving, came out now, as never before. He looked straight into his own heart, with eyes which tried to be as just as the justice of heaven.

He did not stop to blame Hugh Waring, as a hotter-tempered man might have done. He understood how Carrie's sad, sweet face, and lonely seeming life, had touched the man's heart, and so forgave him, even for the rashness which would have made bad worse.

As for Carrie herself, he seemed to have only now begun to love her at all. He opened his eyes and saw what he had been doing when he took into his keeping this mere girl, this young creature whose natural aliment was love, and then deliberately starved her—expected her to be as self-contained and independent as his mother had been. How recklessly he had been throwing away his pearl of great price! But what if it were not altogether too late for him to recover it? She had loved him once—she had said that she could love him, even now, if he cared again to be her lover. Did he not care? His pulses began to throb, very much as if he were not an old young man. If love, tender and patient, could win her back, she should yet be more his own than ever, please heaven.

He would never pain her, he resolved, by telling her what he had heard. If ever she felt near enough to him again to confide in him, her confidence should come unforced and unsought. But he would use every power to make her happy. He would not be too proud to knock again at her heart's door—would any tender voice bid him enter?

At last he saw from the covert where he stood, with eyes grown used to the darkness, Hugh Waring come out and walk rapidly down the path, as if trying to escape from himself. Then he went into the house, lit a light, and looked at the clock. It was midnight; now, at last, he would go upstairs to his wife. He found her lying, with white, still face, upon the scarcely whiter pillow. He knew that she was not asleep; but he saw that she wished him to think her so, and respecting her wish, he got to bed silently.

The next day, making some excuse of just received letters, Hugh went away. For one moment, just before he left, he managed to see Mrs. Hannaford alone, though she had carefully avoided him all the morning.

"Do I bid you good-bye for ever?" he asked, looking into those sad, entreating eyes of hers which had wrought his woe.

"I think that is best," she said, gently, "unless you can come back as much my husband's friend as mine."

He bent over her hand, and left on it the kiss he had never dared to press upon her lips.

"I want to tell you that you have done right. You have refused me the only thing I cared for in life. You have sent me out into the world a wayfarer, without a hope or an interest; but you have done right. We shall be thankful, both of us, when we come to death and judgment. Heaven bless you, and forgive me!"

He was gone before she could answer him, and she



[THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.]

heard him saying good-bye to her husband in the yard. Was she never to see that handsome, loving face again in all time? Never to hear again that voice which had spoken to her words of such strong tenderness? Was it her destiny to go on in the old, cold life, till she was an old, old woman? Why, she might live to be eighty—people died sometimes, and she was only eighteen now. The late July was warm and bright out of doors, but she felt strangely cold. She got a shawl and wrapped herself in it, and then some idle tears, of which she was hardly conscious, fell, till they had somehow eased by a little her woe.

Mr. Hannaford was wise enough to stay away from her all the afternoon. Before tea she tried to make herself fresh and bright for him. She would not half do her duty.

When the meal was over, she saw with surprise that her husband's favourite horse and light cart stood in front of the gate.

"Will you go over to Danbury with me?" he asked, following the direction of her eyes.

"Can you get away? I thought at this time of day you were always so busy."

"Yes, but the busiest days are over. The hay crop is almost all in. The rest can get along with the work without me, and I should like to see a little more of my wife, now that I have her all to myself again."

She tripped upstairs for her shawl and hat, feeling more light of heart than she would have believed, two hours ago, could be possible.

Have I made you understand aright, I wonder, this little woman's not uncommon type of character? If she had had a stronger and deeper individuality, she would have been less easy to content. Now she asked only for enough love. She had a nature which needed summer days and sunshine; fond, smiling eyes; clinging fingers. Love, *per se*, was more to

her than any particular lover; and, as she said, she had loved her husband first. But love she must have, or life to her was utterly without hope or savour. She had intellect enough to understand Waring's tastes; but intellect was not her speciality. She had little originality, and could never make of her mind a kingdom. But she was pure and sweet, with a native-born conscientiousness which would be likely to carry her safely through places which might have been full of peril for far stronger women; and a capacity for self-devotion, if she could only be loved tenderly enough to call it forth, which in itself was infinite.

She remembered how sad Waring might be at this hour, and felt herself an unfeeling monster because her heart was growing so glad, as she bowed along by her husband's side over the pleasant country roads, with the sunset light upon the fair new-mown fields, and the clouds opening gates of flame into the celestial kingdom.

When they reached home at last, after moon and stars had risen, her husband lifted her out, and held her a moment in his arms while he kissed her. She felt herself blushing like a girl. As for him, in this strife to win her heart anew, there was more of excitement and endeavour than he had ever known in the easy days when he was her lover. Having felt himself near losing her, he began to understand how much keeping her was worth his while.

She went indoors quite at fault about herself. Whom, then, did she love? Could it be that she was so weak as to be constant only to what was present? Had Hugh Waring's strong tenderness taken such slight hold on her light nature that she could be happy with another on the very day he had gone away sorrowful? Then she reflected that this other was her husband, in whom only her happiness ought to lie. What then? She would not think out her puzzle. Instead, with hope young again in her

heart, she made her hair smooth, her dress tasteful, and went downstairs to sit in the moonlight beside the man from whose coldness, only last night, she had been tempted to flee away.

For a few days, her husband's newly-born devotion made her happy. Then a reaction came over her, and she was wretched. The better satisfied she became with him, the more dissatisfied she was with herself. Not a caress did he give her that she did not think:

"Would he do this, and this, if he knew how near I had come to loving someone else?"

She grew at last to shrink secretly from every demonstration of his love; and he, watching her keenly, felt that somehow the past was raising a barrier between them, and wondered sadly if his best endeavours were to fail, and this wife of his heart was never again to be fully and freely his own.

As for her, she grew thin and pale. Her bright lips were bright no longer, her eyes had dark rings under them. Night after night she lay awake and thought, and thought, coming always to the same conclusion—she had no right to his love until he knew all; and if he knew all, he himself would withdraw it from her. She was not ready to trust him, because he had been so old for his years, so fixed in his ways, so unimpassioned, during all the first months of their married life, that she could not believe it would be in his power either to understand or to forgive her. So she went on, bearing her burden through slow days and silent nights, until the anniversary of her wedding came round.

Through the day, her uncle and his wife were with them, and a few other friends. The little festival was of the husband's planning, and the wife felt that in barely living through it, in hearing and answering congratulations upon her happy fate, she had gone to the uttermost limit of her endurance. The guests wondered at this white, still wraith, this unwifelike bride, this woman whom a single year seemed to have turned to stone. Joseph Hannaford's heart sank within him. Was nothing, then, left for him but to plant rosemary over the grave of his hopes? How thankful he was when the last guest was gone. He came then and stood beside his wife, and drew a ring from his pocket.

"I don't know that you will care for it now," he said; "but I got this ring to give you as the token of a new bridal. If you could love me to-day as well as you did one year ago, I think I could make you happier, for I understand better what love means to women."

She drew away the hand he had taken. A brilliant colour flamed in her cheeks, and her heart throbbed chokingly; but a courage which was half desperation shone from her eyes. She spoke passionately.

"You must not put that ring on; you must never say one tender, loving word to me again until you know me just as I am."

Then, told clearly, steadily, unflinching, without reserve or concealment, her story came. It was the story of her whole married life; her disappointment because he did not love her enough; her patient little endeavours to please him, which bore no fruit; then Hugh Waring's interest and tenderness; and, last of all, his love, and the strong temptation it was to her.

And then she cried, almost with a sob:

"It has nearly killed me to have you so good and kind as you have been lately. Every fond word or deed has pierced me like a knife, for I have thought how different you would be if you knew it all. And the more I loved you, the more wretched I was."

He took her close into his arms, in a clasp which meant peace, and pardon, and, above all, love. He bent over her, and said, fondly:

"Dear, I did know it all, ever since the night before Waring left, and it never turned me from you for a single hour. I blamed myself too much to blame you."

She felt as if her heart, which had been breaking with woe before, would burst now with rapture.

"Joe," she cried, "you are divine!"

"No, dear, very human; but I love you. Are you ready to wear my pledge?"

So, in the gathering darkness, he slipped his ring upon her finger, and in the joy of a new bridal they two were made one.

The next day she wrote two lines, which she sent to an address Hugh Waring had given her, the direction of his London bankers:

"MR. WARING—I am, and always shall be, your faithful friend; but I love my husband."

This little messenger was sent after him over seas, to find him by Rhine or Rhone, wherever his errant steps were wandering. Let us hope, when he read it, it cured his heartache.

"If she be not fair for me,
What care I how fair she be?"

L. C. M.



[A TERRIBLE DISCOVERY.]

THE SHELL GATHERER.

BY THE

Author of "The Crown Jewels," "Alfred, the Gipsy," &c., &c.

CHAPTER III.

A SEARCH was now instituted of the closest character. More than once those who sought his lordship passed the wall wherein he was concealed. He heard their voices, and gathered enough to know that they were, indeed, as his fears foretold, looking for him. He thanked old Alice in his heart for the secure place in which she had so carefully hidden him, and feeling secure, he laid down on the hard floor to try to get some rest, trusting that when he awoke his pursuers would have left the tower.

Suddenly a shriek, far above him in the air, startled him. Then a dark body passed, like a descending rock, by a little window in the cliff. He was unable what to make of it. But it was the falling body of the woman. Again he slept.

When he next awoke, they had departed. It was high noon, and they had been gone two hours—Captain Manners—satisfied that the nobleman had escaped him by leaving the tower at the outset, on seeing him land. Lord Roben could see that it was day by a light that came through the breathing hole, or small window in the rock that looked towards the sea. It was not large enough to put his head out of, yet sufficiently so to afford him light and air, and a prospect of the ocean; and even, by putting his face close to it, he could discern the topmasts of the armed schooner laying to under the cliff.

"Their vessel is not yet gone! Perhaps Alice waits till they sail fairly off before she comes to let me out. So I am discovered at last! They know my hiding-place. Could the woman have betrayed for their gold? But it may not be, since she hides me from them. I will wait with patience. Better be here a time than in a prison. When I get out again, I will take the first ship I can reach for the wilds of Australia. There, they tell me, men question not men. There I will be like the lion free in his forests. Alice! Alice! Nay, I must not call too loud. My foes may be near. But I hunger, and am perishing for water. I will try and rest again and, in sleep, forget I am here!"

But he could not repose. He walked up and down his cavern, beneath the foundations of the tower, and ever and anon paused and listened at the door. He would then try it, and endeavour to open it, but it moved no more than the rock out of which it was

cut. He then looked out of his little crevice upon the sea.

The vessel was sailing easily along under main, foresail, and jib, the breeze light, evidently waiting for her boat's crew and officers. By this he was assured that they must be searching for him in the vicinity of the tower.

So hours passed on. He grew impatient, and then anxious. He was constantly passing between the window in the rock and the door of the rock. The blood-red rays of the setting sun fell slanting into his hiding-place. The sea was crimson with its beams. To his great joy, he saw the schooner come out from under the cliff, with her boats all aboard, and with her canvas set aloft and aloft, steer seaward. This sight caused him to forget his day of torture and anxiety. As the schooner receded his heart grew lighter, and he breathed freer.

"They are full a league away now, and are leaving, giving up the search. It has been a hard day's purchase, this pleasing sight. Now I shall soon be released. Already the shades of evening veil her from my sight, and the stars begin to sparkle above the waves. Alice—dame—good dame, Alice!" he shouted, as he approached and shook at the massive door.

"Come and open!"

He listened and shouted again:

"Woman! nurse! Alice! I am hungry, and thirsting for water! Haste and open! The vessel is two leagues away—and where dost thou loiter?"

He listened, but heard no sound save that of the dashing of the waves, as it was borne upward to his ear from the base of the cliff.

It grew darker in the cavern each moment, and he finally shouted at the full top of his deep voice, sharpened by anger and half awakened suspicion:

"Woman! Ho, hillo! Why do you not come and open this door, and let me forth? Shall I be left to die?"

"Die!" answered a distant echo from the vault's galleries.

He paused, amazed! It seemed the voice of a mocking demon. Fear and suspicion had already begun to be formed in his mind—mere shadows, at first, flitting across his thoughts. At length he put them into the shape of words, as he paced to and fro, at intervals stopping to utter a loud shout.

"What if she has been carried off, and is now a captive in the vessel I so gladly saw leaving the coast! If so, I rejoice at my own destruction, for only she knows where I am—only she can open the door. Yet, wherefore should they take her? They seek only me. Perhaps—perhaps," he gasped, "she

has been slain, for I heard a fierce cry and sound of distress, and her voice! Perhaps she has only fled, and will return soon. I will try and think so. I will not dwell on the worst side of the dread alternatives. I will wait. I will be composed. I will be content to pass this night here, and in the morning she will be here. Come to my aid, patience! Away, cowardly fears, apprehensions, and timid suspicions! I will let the morning bring all to pass. So! it is hard resting on hunger for a couch, and thirst for a coverlid; but it is better than prison. Better the ills I have than those I might have!"

Thus soliloquising, he concentrated the energy of a spirit of no ordinary strength of character, and, with a calm though rigid aspect, stood leaning by the hole in the rock, and gazed quietly out upon the stars. There was a slight breeze, which poured in at the crevice and cooled his feverish brow. The wind, at the same time, blew outward, from a rough spur of the external rock, a shred, like a streaming pennon, which flapped between him and the evening sky. It attracted his attention, and he at length extended his arm and, disengaging it from the sharp needle of the rock, drew it in.

"What is this? A fragment of cloth, and intermingled with hair—human hair! How can this have come here! No human being could have passed out of this small crevice, and left it clinging to the rock. Doubtless some wretch has fallen, or leaped from the tower above, and their clothes have caught in the descent, and shreds have been left here. Well, they are at peace. The only good of this life is that it has death at the end!"

He cast the long hair and fragment on the floor, and soon forgot it—though, at intervals, he would wonder if the dark body he had seen falling in the morning like lightning past his loophole, had not been a human body.

All night he walked the cavern. The secrets of his meditations, who may reveal? Who knows the things of the spirit of man, but the spirit of man within him? A lifetime may be reviewed in a wakeful night! Thoughts go swifter than pens, and thoughts write out volumes on the memory with immeasurable rapidity. The acts of a long life, good and evil, the thoughts can volume in a few hours. When wicked men are wakeful they read themselves. They are their own book. Read—read—read they must! They may shut their eyes; but the eyes of the soul close never, but read on and read ever, whether the outward man will or not. This terrible, ceaseless reading of the life is what makes a night of wakefulness so dreadful to bad men!

So Lord Roben passed the long night, perusing

the acts of his life, to which the ever open ears of his conscience were vainly tried to be closed.

At length, day came. The sun rose, and the gloom of his cavern was dispelled. Hunger and thirst now made him frantic. He shouted for Dame Alice. He began to utter execrations upon the woman, and to charge her with wilful desertion, when his eyes fell on the piece of dress.

He took it up from the floor, and instantly recognised it as a part of the gown she had worn; and the long, gray, and black hair, which he saw was torn up by the roots from the head, he knew was hers.

For a few moments he remained stupefied with the fearful discovery. The certainty that the body which had fallen down the cliff was that of Dame Alice was now clearly apparent to his appalled soul.

"She has perished! They have cast her over the wall, and my fate is sealed! I am buried alive!"

This was spoken with a hollow voice, and a face as pale as the marble that effigies the dead of earth. His hand spook that grasped the lock of hair, and his whole frame was agitated.

"What said she, as she left me? That the secret of the door was so done, that no eye, no hand could detect, but only those who knew it! The woman is murdered by them, perhaps for refusing to betray me; and I am left to perish—entombed alive!"

He at length, with an aspect of despair, scarcely lighted by a ray of hope, surveyed, with a ghastly look, his prison. He walked around it. He examined every irregularity. He inspected the door, and tried to shake it. He threw himself across the room, like a battering ram, against it. He then examined the window. It was *exceedingly* larger than to receive his arm, and the rock was two feet in thickness.

"I must die," he said, after an hour's restless and frenzied examination of the strength of his hiding-place. "My voice can never be heard, save by the mocking billows. Must I die? Must I perish here day by day? feel death eating at my heart and drying my brain? Nay! I will meet it, and end my torture ere it begins."

CHAPTER IV.

Two years have passed since the scenes in the foregoing chapter transpired, and we once more return to the tower upon the cliff, but not with the same characters. The evening sun glances its arrows of gold and crimson along the rippling sea, and is reflected richly from the wooded cliffs and rocks, tingeing them with a ruby glow. Far and wide expands the ocean, its line unbroken by isle or sail, until it meets the rosy horizon.

A boat lay moored in the little cove by the sand-bar, at the foot of the steep path leading from the tower to the seaside, at the place where Dame Alice had so bravely rescued, ten years before, this very night, the lovely little girl wrecked with the barque. The boat is that of a fisherman, and over its side hang nets, a-drying; its brown sail is furled to the low, black mast. It contains no one; but ascending the steep steps of the cliff side, is a youth and an old man, who have just landed from her. They soon reach the top, the latter laden with shining fish, while the other carries across his shoulder a dip-net, through the interstices of which shone, with divers bright tints, a number of beautiful sea-shells, of all sizes.

"It is a steep climb, lad," said the old man, setting down his strings of fish, as he reached the top; "I once had limb and wind to mount it, and not mind it so more than a hare. But I be getting old now; I am well on to sixty-seven, and that is pretty close to the threescore an' ten."

"I will take the fish for you, father; you go and lay down under the old tower wall till I get back," said the youth, with affection; while a noble look of benevolence lighted up his handsome, though sun-burned face.

"Nay, Philip, my son, I am not yet good for nothing," said the old man, stoutly. "You have enough weight with your shells, and the ladies will rather buy them than my fish. When I was a lad, ne'er a penny could a man have got for a sea-shell; but now it is a better trade than fishing. I will rest me here a bit, and then will trudge."

"Father," said the lad, gazing upon the tower, "while you are resting, I will go and look over this old place; for I never yet had time to see more than the outside."

"Nay, boy, thou art best outside o' it," answered the fisherman, in a grave tone. "The place has an evil name, and I have reason to know it; no place for an honest Christian to set foot in."

"Is it haunted, father?" asked the youth, with interest and lively curiosity evidently awakened.

"I have heard the cry and wail of ghosts or devils, no one knoweth which; and I do not want to hear such sounds again."

"Where was it, father? I recollect that last year,

when we came down here from the hamlet where we live, you said that robbers were haunting here."

"Yes, robbers and ghosts, and Satan, it may be. It is a bad old place, and I ne'er heard good come o' it. Once it was dwelt in, some dozen years or so ago, by an arrant witch, Dame Alice; and one night, in a storm, the — flow off with her from the tower top and dropped her, shrieking awful, in the sea! Some say she believed that she could fly, and so jumped off, in her folly, and was drowned at the bottom of the cliff. Her ghost haunts the place ever since. Sometimes she is seen dancing a-top o' yon rock, and sometimes skipping about o' moulit nights on the sea below."

"Hast seen her, father?"

"Many a time! But I always gave her a wide berth; for I could hear her scream long before she was in sight."

"Perhaps it was a curlew, father?"

"It sounds a very deal like one, boy; but a witch can imitate any sound. But this is not the worst. There has been heard the most awful cries coming out from under the tower. They seemed to be in the very heart of the rock. One night, it may be ten years ago, this very month, or thereabout, I was catching mackerel off the tower. There had been a great storm two nights before, and a ship was wrecked, and not a soul saved, and by that token I remember the night well. Jacob, my brother, and I were in the boat. All at once the stillness was broke by a terrible cry that seemed to come from the mid air. We were well frightened, and Jacob's line slipped through his fingers into the sea, and I lost the best hook I owned, and a line sixty fathoms long."

"But the cry, father? What was it?"

"It sounded like some fiend shut up in the heart of the cliff. It was a most dreadful sound as ever human ears heard. It seemed to cry for help—and then it would roar and yell like a wild beast. We were so near the cliff that we pulled out, as fast as we could use our oars, and came to our comrades in two other boats, who also were frightened at the noise; and though most of us believed it to be one of the evil ones said to haunt the tower, two of the boldest proposed landing, to see if it might not be some human being in great distress. So their courage gave us courage, and we landed, and armed with our boat-hooks and fish knives, seven of us in all, we got up to the tower."

"You were very bold, father."

"We were very scared, boy, and a hare crossing our path would have made us run away back again. When we got near the tower, just about where you see that larch tree, we were all startled by the cries again; for we had not heard them since we landed. They now seemed to come from below and out in the air. The bravest men drew close to the cliff edge, and said the sounds were not from the tower, but were from the middle air—and that it was not from an earthly being. We trembled, but still listened, till we were assured that they were not in the air, but far below. This discovery not a little amazed us, and as they grew more and more horrible, we did not long delay in returning to our boats. When we got to them, we could hear the shrieks above us. By-and-bye they ceased, and we pulled off, and for my part, I have never fished there again by night."

"I think I would not have feared, father," answered the youthful Philip.

"Youth is ignorant, and ignorance is rash, boy! But, see! what brave cavalcade have we here?"

The youth turned his head, and saw galloping forward, towards the tower, a party of four or five gay riders, evidently an excursion from some one of the country-seats of the noblemen or gentry within the vicinity.

"They are Lord and Lady Montague, lad! Doff thy cap when they pass!" said the old man, setting him the example of deference "to one's betters" by uncovering his rough, white head, while yet they were a hundred yards off.

But the lad did not hear. His eyes were fixed upon an apparition of loveliness such as only visit the dreams—if even these—of the lowly born. It was a fair, child-like maiden of fourteen or fifteen, not older, dressed in a green hunting jacket, with gold buttons, a broad-brimmed hat hanging by the ribbon around her neck upon her shoulders, over which waved and flashed in the sun-rays, as she cantered rapidly along, a cloud of golden-brown hair. Her charming and expressive face was full of animation, and richly roscate with the excitement of motion. She was laughing merrily, and her voice was an alembic, in which all sweet sounds were fused, to make a voice that was melody, even though mocking-birds sang around in rivalry of its cadences. This voice caused to vibrate a chord of emotion untouched before in the heart of the young shell-gatherer, while he gazed upon her face, as she

flew past on a fleet, snow-white pony, with the air of one fascinated.

"You have made a conquest there, fair Agnes," said, laughingly, a young man who rode by her rein, as he pointed with the silver whistle of his riding-whip at Philip, who with his bag of shells across his shoulder, stood with his dark eyes riveted in homage upon her.

The young girl looked towards the fisher's son, and seeing his handsome face, his dark locks uncovered and finely waving about his open and noble brow, his piercing eye, she heeded not his coarse garb nor his bag of shells, but blushing at his ardent looks, which met fully her eyes, she looked more beautiful than before, and turning to the young man, said, gaily:

"How handsome he is!"

She looked back again, and seeing Philip still following her with bright eyes and a crimsoned cheek, she dropped her eyes.

"Upon my word," answered her companion, "he has made one also!"

"Ha! old George, are you here?" said the elder of the party, reining up a large chestnut coloured horse near the fisherman, who stood cap in hand, with his son near him. "I am glad to see you hearty. You have had luck on the water, I see. Take those fine fish up to the castle; here is a half-sovereign—that will pay thee for thy fish and buy thee something for the good dame."

"You are very kind, my good lord," answered the old man, gratefully.

"And who is this? I have never seen him," added the Countess of Montague, a youthful and pretty woman, with an air and manner of great sweetness, smiling as she spoke, as if to encourage him.

"My—my son, my lady. When he has been with me to the castle, your lordship and ladyship have always been up to London. He sells shells, as you see, to the neighbouring gentry's ladies; and hearing your ladyship had come home, we were going to your ladyship's house with them, hoping your ladyship would find some to your liking among 'em."

While he was speaking, she was regarding the face of the youth, and so steadily, that he turned his head and looked confused! and of course, being handsome by nature, looked handsome still. Educated and refined people do not notice the dress, but the face, expression, air, tone, bearing; the vulgar, costume—and so judge; while to cultivated minds, costume is lost sight of in the superior claims of the "human face divine." Lady Montague knew how to separate the face from the apparel. She turned to her noble husband, whose naturally proud bearing was only apparent to his peers, for to the poor and humble he always seemed humble as they, and said in a low tone:

"That face is not that of a peasant! that eye is like a prince's, and so is the native carriage of the head. It cannot be that he is indeed this old man's child."

"You are ever seeking for romance, Eleanor," answered the earl, smiling. "Believe me, when he gets old he will be as commonplace a fisherman as George, here. Youth always is attractive."

"You are so practical, Conyers. But let us go on after Agnes and Radnor. What a graceful pair they make, for Agnes has now the height of a woman. I trust that they will take to one another, for my heart is on the union of our house with that of my cousin, Lord Cranstown. Radnor is now nearly of age, and will soon, as Lord Cranstown, be one of the most desirable matches in England."

"Wait awhile, dear wife; Agnes will be too young yet, for four years, to think of husbands, and by that time Lord Cranstown may have been taken captive by some other fair dame."

"It is not injudicious to begin in time to make moves for so important an issue as I hope to see brought about. There they are, reined-up on the very verge of the cliff! They are rash; any sudden alarm would cause their horses to leap off! Agnes! child, draw back!" cried the countess, as she came near them.

"We are only gazing, from this height, upon the noble expanse of sea, my dear mother. Is it not sublime? See, far in the distance, a white sail is visible, like a speck of dawn."

"And would you like to be on board, Agnes?" said Radnor Cathcart.

"Oh, no! I shudder at the idea of being in a vessel. The sea is beautiful as a spectacle from this safe place; but I cannot hear it roar without a secret and indefinable dread. If I ever dream of the sea, I behold it lashed with a tempest, and seem to be on board of a ship imperilled, and always wake struggling with the billows and gasping for air."

"How strange!" said the young noble. "I never dream but pleasant dreams, for you always mingle with them."

This was said with gallantry, and in an under tone. The countess exchanged a glance with her husband,

but evidently with relation to the words spoken by the young girl.

"Come, let us alight, and walk through the ruins," said the earl.

The quarry in attendance, who wore the livery of the Montegle family, took the horses of the countess and his master, and was about to take the bridle of the pony, from which Agnes Montegle had bounded, refusing the proffered aid of the young man, when the latter, who was also on his feet, called haughtily to Philip:

"Ho, boy! Come hither and hold these animals; and see you walk my hunter about—keep him in motion, for he's warm—hark ye! do ye hear!"

There was something in the manner and voice of the young nobleman that must have offended the fisher's lad, for he coldly smiled, and turning from them with his bag of shells, walked away.

"What, do you refuse?" cried Radnor Cathcart, with anger.

"Obey me, and hold my horse!"

"I am not thy servant; I am free to consent or refuse, as it pleases me," was the reply of the shell-gatherer.

"But I will teach thee civility to thy superiors, as it pleases me!" responded the youthful nobleman, red with ire; and advancing towards him with his riding whip, would have struck him, but for the voice of the earl:

"Hold thy ready hand, Radnor," he said, in a slight tone of reproof. "Thou forgettest, so long hast thou been in India, that English peasants are not Hindostanee slaves. He is free, and will freely obey of request, but not of command."

"See, Radnor, how I will rule him," said Agnes, with a smile. "Come hither, fair youth, and please hold my horse, while I go and see the tower."

In an instant Philip was at her rein. In the next moment he felt the hand of the young noble upon his throat, and found himself flying ten feet from him. He did not fall.

The countess shrieked. The earl sprang forward; but before he reached the spot, the shell-gatherer walked away, slow, proud, and self-possessed.

"I did not look for such high blood in a cliff-side sailor's lad," he said to the countess, who, pale at the sudden crisis just passed, was watching, with half-terrified interest, the receding Philip.

"He is no son of the old fisher, my lord. Never did I witness such courage, pride, chivalry, all at once, in the best born of the realm."

"He is a base lout, and shall suffer for this infamous insult," muttered Radnor Cathcart, as he rose to his feet.

"Without doubt, such conduct in a peasant ought not to be borne," said the earl. "These people must know their place, and what is due to rank. George, thou art to blame in bringing thy boy up with such a temper."

"Nay, my lord, but he's always gentle hitherto. This bout of his amazement. I know not what evil spirit hath broke out o' the boy. I ne'er knew the like before in him."

"Teach him not to show the like again! He hath made a deadly foe, I fear, in this young lord," this was said aside and in an under tone. "Tell me truly, is this lad thy own child?"

"What, my lord?"

"Nay, answer me."

"But, my lord, he is my only stay. I am old and stricken, and he is of great help to me. When the times are hard and the fish are scarce, he gathers shells, and makes me many a shilling for winter comfort."

"But you evade my question. Is he your son?"

"My good lord, everybody will tell you he is. He bears my name—he will tell you so himself."

"George, you are not candid and open. Once more I ask you to say whether he is your child."

The old man looked troubled. He bent down his eyes, as if he were counting his fish. He looked every way but in the nobleman's face. At length he said:

"My lord, I am too near the grave to lie, especially to so great a man as your lordship. If your lordship will tell me when I can see your lordship, and no one is near, I will tell the whole matter."

"To-morrow, at breakfast, be at the castle."

"I will not fail, your lordship," reluctantly answered the old man, as the nobleman turned away to rejoin the countess, who had overheard all that was said.

"You will find that I am right, Conyers," said the countess, smiling. "The boy will prove to have come astray. Mark me, Conyers, that the old man will to-morrow tell you that he is no blood-relation to the youth. A plough-horse and my Arabian might as well be kindred as these two."

"I am sorry to see that Radnor's early Indian life has made him imperative and fiery for our colder climate. The lad ought to have held his horse, and

"Any other would have done so gladly; but this

youth, who being, doubtless, as high-born as Cathcart—"

"Upon my word, Eleanora, you jump at conclusions famously."

"I am assured that only an instinctive consciousness of being an equal, could have led to this shell-gatherer's haughty refusal."

"You have odd fancies. But let us join them."

They joined the youthful pair, who were at the tower's entrance. Cathcart was gloomy, and seemed to have some cause of dissatisfaction.

"My young friend," said Lord Montegle, who now came up, "let us go about the tower, and from the top get a view of the fine sea prospect, for which we have ridden hither."

As they wandered about the ruin, Cathcart's good disposition returned; and the earl entertained them with stories and legends of the place.

While thus talking, they came to the end of a passage, into which opened a side avenue; but as the arched ceiling above had fallen in, there was plenty of light to disclose its whole length.

"Let us follow this passage, Radnor," said Agnes, "and see where it leads."

"Perhaps into some old dungeon," pleasantly answered the young noble, as he followed her. The earl and countess also went after them.

"Here the passage ends against the rock, and there is no going farther," said Agnes, who was in advance.

"That is odd," remarked the earl. "The passage could not have been constructed to lead nowhere but against the face of this rock."

While he was speaking, Radnor exclaimed, drawing his hand quickly from the rock, over which he had been passing it to feel for a door:

"I have wounded my hand! Here is the steel point of a dagger, or knife, sticking out of this rock."

All drew near; and the earl feeling the object, perceived clearly that it was the rusted fragment of a dagger.

"But how sticking out of the solid rock?" he exclaimed.

"Here is a crevice above and below it, dear father," said Agnes, whose brighter eyes had been able to detect what in the obscurity the rest did not perceive.

With the aid of a pocket-knife, the earl traced an irregular crevice for several inches, and then lost it.

"This must be a secret entrance into some cavern in the rock. If we had a torch we might make some rare discovery!"

"I will get one."

"Do so, Cathcart," said the countess; "I am full of curiosity."

In a few minutes the young nobleman re-appeared with the light, and by its aid the crevice, or joint, was soon traced for length enough to show them that an irregularly formed block of stone concealed the entrance to some subterranean chamber. After some time and close inspection, Agnes detected the stone bolt, almost hid by mould. This discovery was hailed with joy.

The earl and Radnor with their united strength, forced it back, and then cautiously opened the door.

"I shudder at what may be revealed!" cried the countess. "I will not look till I know!" and she drew back.

Upon opening the heavy door, the earl, who looked first in, started back, with an exclamation of horror. The countess echoed it with a shriek. Agnes trembled, and clung to the earl, who called to Radnor to thrust in the torch; for he had looked in without it, and seen only obscurely what had so deeply moved him.

"Behold! It is a human skeleton upright," he cried. "Some wretched prisoner, left here to perish by some tyrant of the tower. Let us go in and examine."

He entered, followed by Radnor; and Agnes shrunk back with the countess.

"What is it, Conyers?" asked the latter, shuddering.

"There is a cavern here, made for a prison, and in it is the skeleton of a man. He seems to have perished standing by this little hole or window, looking out for air or aid. See, his long arms are clasped through it, and keep the body in its place. There is some secret history of crime written here! The last day only will reveal it."

"Here is the broken dagger," said Radnor, stooping to raise something from the floor.

"The same that had the point," exclaimed the earl, "for they fit."

"He has tried to pry open his prison door, and broken it in the attempt," said Cathcart.

"Poor prisoner!" said Agnes, venturing in. "How much he must have suffered!"

And she timidly surveyed the suspended skeleton, as it glared white and bleached by the torchlight.

"See, father," she suddenly called out, "it has a ring upon one hand."

"I see it. It may reveal something."

The earl approached to remove the ring, which was a signet; in doing so, at his touch, the fingers, hand, bones, arms, and whole frame fell in pieces, and the skeleton lay in fragments upon the floor of the dungeon.

The earl secured the ring, and holding it to the torch, after a moment's scrutiny, gave utterance to an excited exclamation of amazement, and raising his eyes with reverence to heaven, said, solemnly:

"There is divine justice and retribution still on earth."

"What, my lord?" asked the countess.

"Who is he?" inquired Cathcart, eagerly.

"This captive, who has so miserably perished, is none other than the renegade and parricide, Lord Robert Clan William. Though he escaped the scaffold by flight, heaven suffered him not to live. This solves all mystery. Ten years ago, I knew he was pursued to this tower, where he was said to hide himself; but he baffled pursuit. Without doubt, in shutting himself in here to escape his foes, he unintentionally buried himself alive; for we see by his broken dagger, by his attitude at the window, how he was seeking escape. He is said to have poisoned his noble and venerable father for title, and also betrayed a trust committed to him by the crown. He fled, an outlaw, and concealing himself here, was punished as we see."

The countess withdrew from the spot, under emotions of horror; and the earl, after examining the dreadful place to see what more he might find, closed the stone door, and the whole party, slowly and silently, with solemn reflections, returned to the upper apartments.

The sun was now low, and they were soon in saddle, but deeply impressed with what had been so strangely revealed to them.

A mile from the tower, they overtook the old fisherman and the young shell-gatherer. As they cantered by the foot travellers, the two stopped and raised their caps.

"Good even, ladies; a fair ride," said the old man.

"A good even of fair fishing for thee," answered the merry Agnes; "and if thou wilt come to the castle, I will buy all thy shells," she added, to the youthful Philip, who, hat in hand, stood gazing admiringly, and with the deepest awe, upon her.

At this, Cathcart, who seemed to have taken a bitter dislike to the shell-gatherer, either because he was too handsome, or too independent, or too kindly spoken to by Agnes, with an ugly light in his eye, rode so close to the youth as violently to knock the net of shells from his shoulders upon the ground. The marine treasures were scattered over the road, and Radnor, with a mocking laugh of satisfaction, galloped on. It was already starry night when they reached Castle Montegle, and trotted through the ancient gateway.

Two hours afterwards, the fisherman and his son appeared, and, for the night, took up their abode in a peasant's house, outside of the walls, ready to enter early the following morning to dispose of their fishes and shells.

(To be continued.)

A SYSTEM of telegraph money orders has been arranged in France. The sum deposited will have to be described in the message both in writing and figures, and all the rules now in force, as well as the tariffs, will be applicable to these despatches, which on arrival at their destination will be sent to the Post-office, and notice given to the person to whom they are addressed.

A RICH miser of Savoy recently lost his sight by cataract. He sent for a surgeon and promised him 3,800 francs, provided his sight was regained. The treatment proved successful, and the sight of one eye was soon restored, upon which the doctor was informed that one eye was as much as was necessary, and as only one half the work was done, only one half the sum promised, 1,900 francs, would be given. The law will decide, and doubtless that the miser is doubly foolish.

A DEPUTATION of Scotch post-horse proprietors has waited on the Chancellor of the Exchequer to urge a modification of the stage-coach duty. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his reply, said he could not hold out any hope of a remission of taxation in their favour. There was no exceptional burden, and it would break down the principle of his measure if he were to grant their request. Although the taxes might bear somewhat hardly upon them, he did not think their case would excite much sympathy, for they were evidently well able to bear it.

INTERNATIONAL HORTICULTURAL EXHIBITION.—A grand exhibition of flowers, fruit, vegetables, garden architecture, machines and implements, plant houses and garden furniture will be held at Hamburg from the 2nd till the 12th September, 1869, containing

poraneously with the congress of German botanists, amateurs and gardeners. The exhibition has been warmly taken up on the Continent, and a very influential committee has been formed to represent the United Kingdom of Great Britain on the occasion. The Rev. M. J. Berkeley, rector of Sibbertoft, Market Harborough, has been appointed by the Government her Majesty's Commissioner, and Mr. George Eyles, of the Royal Horticultural Society's Gardens, South Kensington, acts as secretary. The Committee have sent out invitations to all our leading horticulturists and others to exhibit, and steps are in progress to secure the safe conveyance of the British contributions to Hamburg. The prize list is a very rich one, as much as 500 thalers being offered in one of the classes open to public competition. We doubt not but the British horticulturists will do their best to maintain the high reputation they have to the present time enjoyed, and that an exhibition of unusual magnificence will be the result of the united exertions of the various committees here and abroad.

SCIENCE.

It has recently been found that what is called charged silk is very liable to spontaneous combustion. This article, some of our readers are aware, consists of silk which, after having been exposed to the operations of bleaching, cleansing, &c., and losing considerable weight, is brought back to its original condition by the addition of certain astringents, such as catechu, gall nuts, and various salts, especially the sulphate of iron, by which means an increase in weight from one to two or three hundred per cent. is sometimes effected. When dried, at about 212 deg. or 225 deg., this silk has been known to take fire spontaneously as soon as the air had access to it. The result appeared due to the rapid absorption of moisture and attendant oxidation.

THE LIGHT OF THE SKY.—Mr. Harrington, of Ryde, in the Isle of Wight, has propounded a new theory which explains the light of the sky to be the result of chemical change in the inflammable gases which form so large a proportion of the earth's atmosphere—that these inflammable vapours, while under the agency of the sun's actinic and gravitating power, form a tide in that part which is opposite the sun, in which sufficient heat is developed to render that half of our atmosphere luminous, thereby producing the heat and light which warms and enlivens the earth's surface. Mr. Harrington enunciated his views in a lecture before a large and influential audience at Ryde, in February. At the close of the lecture a resolution was carried unanimously, "that the subject commended itself as worthy of careful investigation." And a committee was appointed, of which the mayor and vicar form part, to arrange a public discussion.

THE NEIL ARNOTT SCHOLARSHIP OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.—The Senate of the University of London has received a communication from Dr. Neil Arnott, placing in the hands of the Vice-Chancellor for the University the sum of 2,000*l.*, of which the annual interest is to be applied in the promotion of the study of physical science through the examinations of the University. With this generous gift the senate has determined to found an exhibition of 40*l.* per annum in experimental physics, tenable for two years, to be competed for at the Honours examinations for the First B. Sc. and Preliminary Scientific examinations. This, which is to be distinguished as the "Neil Arnott Exhibition," is to be awarded for the first time in July, 1870. The senate has farther determined to devote the surplus which will arise during the first two years to the production of dies for a medal bearing the likeness of Dr. Arnott, and that a bronze medal struck from these dies shall be given with the exhibition, and that the candidate next in merit shall also receive a medal. Dr. Arnott's is the first endowed exhibition in the University, and it comes from one who has been a member of the senate ever since the foundation of the University, and who is himself highly distinguished in those branches of science to the promotion of which his endowment is to be devoted.

RED RAIN.—Prodigy lovers will be gratified by the intelligence that a fall of what would in other days have been called bloody rain has lately been witnessed. A few weeks back the Neapolitans found their streets stained with red, and their garments spotted with sanguinary-looking drops. Examined closely, the colouring matter of this shower was found to consist of small red grains, sensibly round, and varying from the two-hundredth to the four-hundredth part of an inch in diameter. When the mysterious element of this fall was dispelled, it was clear that the rusty particles were really dust specks drawn up by the wind from African deserts and borne with it across the Mediterranean. This is not an unpre-

cedented phenomenon. Twenty years ago a French philosopher collected a large quantity of dust of the same quality, and probably from the same source, from a house-top at Valence; and, again, a German found the peculiar African grit in Berlin. These facts show how pests, and plagues, and the germs of disease may be carried from country to country by the transporting power of the wind; it is not always inanimate dust that is thus wafted to immense distances. A shower of insects fell at Arâches, in Savoy, last January, which, upon examination, proved to be of a species peculiar to the forests of Central France; and a few years back, Turin was visited by millions of larvae of a fly found nowhere but in the island of Sardinia. These are recent and well proven cases; many more striking instances might be collected from chronicles of things curious.

A DIVING ENGINE OF THE LAST CENTURY.

The astronomer Halley is said to have made great improvements in the diving bell about the year 1721, and to have been the first who by means of such a contrivance set his foot on the ground at the bottom of the sea. But it appears, according to a record which will presently be quoted, that five years before that date, a remarkable experiment was tried at Newton Abbot by a gentleman, whose object was to make explorations beneath the surface of the water "without any communication of air from above." He seems to have succeeded in his attempt, and afterwards to have made frequent use of his machine, though not without occasional peril to himself. It may be that the danger attending the employment of his "most famous diving engine" prevented its adoption by anybody else. But for this one drawback, it is difficult to understand how so remarkable an invention became consigned to oblivion.

Attempts have been made in more recent times to construct a diving apparatus which should be to some extent independent of the atmosphere, one notable case being that of a gentleman (Dr. Payerne, we believe), who made some experiments or exhibitions at the Adelaide Gallery many years ago. In the case of the Devonshire inventor, it would seem that the results were very substantial, and that his genius did not go unrewarded. The extract is taken from a somewhat old book, now probably very scarce, entitled, "General Outlines of Newton Abbot and Newton Bushell, by the Rev. — Sterling." I have only the extract before me, and therefore cannot give the date of the work, though the reference to Mr. Lethbridge's grandson affords a slight clue. The record runs thus:

"Mr. John Lethbridge, the ingenious inventor of a diving machine, by which he was enabled to recover shipwrecked goods from the bottom of the sea without any communication of air from above, was a native of Newton Abbot. He made his first experiment in his own orchard, on the day of the great eclipse in 1715, by going into a large cask, in which he was bunged up for half-an-hour; he then contrived to have the cask placed under water, and found that he could remain longer in it under water than on land. He soon after constructed his machine, which was of wainscot, well secured by iron hoops, and holes for the arms and a small glass window. Five hundred pounds would sink the machine, and the removal of 15 lb. would allow it to return to the surface of the water. In the house of his grandson, John Lethbridge, Esq., of Newton Abbot, is a board, on which is an inscription, dated 1736, stating that he had dived on the wrecks of four English men-of-war, one English East Indian, two Dutch East Indian, two Spanish galleons, and two London galleys, on some of which with good success, but that he was near drowning in the machine five times. With the money he acquired by these adventures he purchased the estate of Odicknoll, in the parish of Kingscarswell. He was interred in the churchyard of Wolborough, December 11th, 1759, and is thus noticed in the register:—Buried, Mr. John Lethbridge, inventor of a most famous diving engine, by which he recovered from the bottom of the sea, in different parts of the globe, almost 100,000*l.* for the English and Dutch merchants."

RELATIONS OF ELECTRICITY TO NERVOUS AND MUSCULAR ACTION.—From a careful consideration of the various observed phenomena, it is deduced that in all cases a discharge of free electricity is the immediately precedent cause of muscular contraction, whether induced by the passage of a current, or otherwise; and this discharge is probably quite analogous to that of the electric organs of the gymnotus or torpedo—a discharge induced by nervous action, producing in the latter case merely a shock, while a similarly induced discharge produces contraction in the contractile tissue of a muscle. It has been farther shown by Dr. Radcliffe that the action of electricity on a nerve, which has passed under the name of electrotonus, and has been supposed to be due to its vitality, is really due only to its very low conductivity,

and may be equally well shown with a wet thread of silk or gutta-percha, but not with a flaxen or hempen thread, which is too good a conductor. Dr. Radcliffe has facilitated future investigation in animal electricity by devising a new system of electrodes, which may readily and with certainty be rendered free from polarisation. These consist of platinum wires flattened at the end, and thickly coated with moist sculptor's clay; and may, by a little manipulation, be rendered perfectly homogeneous.

BALLOON EXPERIMENTS.

It will be remembered that last year an attempt was made to execute aerial trips in this metropolis, surpassing the ascents that have been made on the other side of the channel; but an accident put an end to it in the very beginning—the balloon in question having been destroyed by fire. A new one has since been constructed, on the same plan, only larger and stronger, at an expense of 20,000*l.* It ascends, weather permitting, to a height of 2,000 feet, from a vast circus, constructed of woodwork and canvass, on grounds adjoining Ashburnham House. The car is able to carry thirty persons, with 2,000 lb. of ballast, and an immense guide-rope, ready to afford aid in case the cable might be broken by a sudden gust of wind. An accident of this kind—which, however, may be considered impossible—would change the captive balloon into a free one, and blow the passengers to a distance of some hundred miles in half-an-hour. The greatest inconvenience would be felt by the gazers below, who would possibly be cut into more than two by the fall of the big cable, which is upwards of two tons in weight. Since the balloon has been quite ready, the weather has been so unsettled, that it was difficult to complete ascents without accident.

A private trial trip for special scientific purposes took place on the 5th of May, when Mr. Glaisher, the great air explorer of the age, went up with Mr. Yon, the director of the balloon, and several other French aeronauts; the expedition, which was a tentative one, being joined by Mr. Karl Blind and a few other gentlemen. The wind pressure on that day was extraordinary, varying from 6,000 to 12,000 lb., and the spectacle of the gyrations of the balloon, with its appendage containing a human cargo, was magnificent. The force of the wind and the strain on the cable being found so great, it was thought advisable to make a rope of descent, followed by a second attempt when the state of the atmosphere seemed to have bettered. The balloon, going up to an altitude of 1,500 feet, deviated some 500 feet, through a strong westerly current. The meteorological observations taken were of considerable importance. On the 10th of May the wind-pressure reached to 12,400 lb., when the engines working the pulley had to go up to 4 atmospheric pressures, which gives a real traction force of 60-horse power. For the first time the weather was then clear, and the passengers were able to see, at a glance, Westminster Abbey, Kensington Museum, London Bridge, Harrow-on-the-Hill, the Crystal Palace, &c. Small clouds coming from the west were visible on a level decidedly lower than the horizontal line of the car.

We may mention here that a meteorological observatory is now in course of being established on board, which will be conducted under the honorary supervision of Mr. Glaisher. The readings will bear upon the aneroid and the mercurial barometer, the wet and the dry bulb thermometer, the blackened thermometer, and the blackened thermometer *in vacuo*. Messrs. Negretti and Zambra are constructing an aneroid for registering high level winds. Experiments will, moreover, be tried to ascertain the force of the air electricity. Professional aeronauts are being trained to the difficult art of taking readings accurately; and the best form to be given to the instruments is under the consideration of competent persons. Every reading will be entered in a book of reference, the contents of which will be computed and subjected to proper reductions and calculations. It would be useless to attempt anticipating the results of a series of observations which are just beginning, and which it requires much care and ability to conduct in a satisfactory manner. But it may be allowed to insist on the importance of experiments executed on so large a scale with so much daring. The balloon used for the purpose is the largest in existence, and has proved its capability to hold the pure hydrogen during more than fifteen days, which had hitherto been deemed an impossibility. The working of the apparatus is conducted by Mr. Yon, one of the aeronauts who took part in Nadar's expedition from Paris to Hanover. He is assisted by Mr. Godard, whose name is well known. The inventor and proprietor, Mr. Giffard, the patentee of the "injector," is desirous of studying the art of ballooning with a view to the application of a regular motive power, the invention of which would be the "crowning glory."



[THE RESULT OF FLORENCE'S STORY.]

FAIRLEIGH; OR THE BANKER'S SECRET.

CHAPTER XL.

SEVERAL days had passed, and the surprise occasioned by the mysterious disappearance of Simpkin had ceased to occupy a place in Charles Rowe's mind. But a new subject had filled its place, and suggested many improbable things, and gave him many sad thoughts. He had heard from Clarence only once since his arrival at Brookfall. Why did they not write? was Florence sick? These were harrowing, unanswerable questions, and contributed largely to the young doctor's unhappiness.

He had visited Mrs. Dalvane several times since his accidental introduction to them, and quite a friendship had sprung up between them. Indeed, any person could not help liking Charles Rowe; while Mrs. Dalvane, with her reserved, gentle, lady-like manner, was perfectly irresistible; and Walter, his honesty and noble heart were revealed in his features, and attracted accordingly.

Each time that he had been there Miss Eldon had made her appearance shortly after his arrival. Her presence was a great acquisition to the little circle of friends, and certain it is, that none appreciated it more than did Walter. Serious, uninteresting subjects could not exist in the same atmosphere with her vivacity, and dull faces and sad thoughts were brightened, driven away, or turned into pleasant emotions, and beaming smiles, by the ready wit which flowed so freely, and the natural joyousness that was absolutely contagious.

Outside of Walter's growing regard for the fair girl, this, to him, was a great consideration, as well as a source of comfort. Of late his mother had appeared more sad than usual, and her continued and increasing melancholy, which promised to become morbid, filled him with a vague and indefinite apprehension, which was all the more harassing from the fact that he could not himself define it. Consequently when he saw the pleasure that his mother evinced in the society of Miss Eldon, and the smiles that were called to her face by the *saute* and piquancy of the latter's remarks, it is not strange that, sinking all his own feelings, he wished for Miss Eldon's company from a purely unselfish motive—that his mother might derive benefit therefrom.

The effect upon Mrs. Dalvane was not only momentary, but lasted long after her visitor had departed. "Oh, if mother would always look thus," thought Walter, "how much more pleasant life would be." But a glance at her suffering, yet calm

face, as these thoughts arose in his mind, would show him the impossibility of such a desirable result; and, with a half repressed sigh, he would leave the room, and seek to drown his thoughts in the enthusiasm which welled up within his breast as he gazed upon his almost completed picture.

Charles Rowe stood for a moment, debating to what place he should first proceed. In a moment he had made up his mind, and going to the stable, ordered his horse. The new groom, a young, honest country youth, the son of a neighbour, was prompt and efficient, and in a short time all was ready, and springing quickly into the vehicle, Rowe drove rapidly away.

"I will go to the post-office first," he mused, "there may be a letter from Floss. Dear Floss, how I want to see her," and urging his horse forward, he soon arrived at the office.

The metropolitan reader would have looked in vain for any sign or signs, by which to distinguish the aforesaid place. A country shop, where all kinds of goods and merchandise were thrown heterogeneously together, promiscuously piled upon the shelves, and heaped up in the corners in conglomerate masses; where the dust of ages gathered, without the slightest fear of the approach of a broom; where huge spiders decorated the ceiling with their webs; and where several men came to hang over barrels, and smoke, and talk politics, and then proceed to discuss their neighbours' merits, in no very gentle manner. This place, I repeat, would not strike a person as being worthy of its name; but in the back part, and almost obscured from view by a barricade of flour barrels, was a place about four feet square, with a number of pigeon-holes, which was called the office.

Through the numerous dusty articles that obstructed his way, and by the men, who whispered to each other as he passed, went Rowe, anxious to ascertain whether or not he was again to retrace his steps, ignorant of Florence's welcome.

The obsequious shopkeeper and postmaster was very affable, and after rubbing his hands, and remarking about the weather, the last harvest, *et cetera*, and of course not forgetting to open the old wound in Rowe's heart, by reference to his uncle's death; he, after taxing his hearer's patience to an unpardonable extent, rubbed his hands once more, and having exhausted his stereotyped edition of morning talk, told him that there was no letter.

Rowe scowled. "The jackdaw," he thought, "why did he not tell me so at once," and pushing his way through the passage between the merchandise, he entered his carriage, and considerably provoked, as well as saddened, gathered up his reins and started upon his circuit among his patients.

One there was, who lived a little way beyond Squire Eldon's residence. Rowe had visited this person, and was on his way back. As he neared the mansion he looked out, and descried Nina upon the steps. She saw him, and waved her handkerchief for him to stop. He drew up before the gate, and she ran down the steps, smiling as usual. Extending her hand, she said:

"Oh, doctor, how do you do? Do you know I was just going to ride."

"Were you? Well, perhaps you will honour me with your company; there is plenty of room."

"Yes," she demurely replied, dropping her eyes. "But perhaps that young lady in London might object; you know we must consider all these things."

"You seem to have quite an extensive knowledge of—"

"O yes," interrupted Nina, "you know that, unlike London, everybody in this little town knows their neighbours' affairs from beginning to end. In fact, if by some grievous mischance they should fail to know it, they would instantly make it their business to inform themselves, and then circulate with all haste. The postmaster informed Miss Wrigby, in all secrecy, that the new doctor had a sweetheart in London; Miss Wrigby repeated it to her intimate friend, Miss Brown, who told Miss Toby, and Miss Toby fearing that you, doctor—just think of it—were ingratiating yourself into my affections, told me, that I might take warning and not break my heart. How kind Miss Toby was, eh, doctor?" and Nina concluded with a merry, ringing laugh.

"Yes," replied Rowe, scowling; "a parcel of superannuated, pecking, gossiping old women, who have nothing better to do than meddle with other people's business. The postmaster is worse than they are, however, for he is in the shape of a man, and ought to have something to employ his mind. But will you ride with me as far as Mrs. Dalvane's? I stop there for a short time."

"Yes, with pleasure; wait one moment please, until I procure my hat and cape."

In a moment she returned, and as she entered the carriage, she remarked:

"You will probably hear that we are engaged ere long, for I saw Polly Priggin, Miss Toby's intimate friend, watching me as I came down the steps."

"I should be surprised at nothing. I suppose three looks and a half-a-dozen nods would constitute an excellent basis for a breach of promise case, in this community?"

"Yes, if they were the right kind," she laughingly replied.

For the remainder of the ride he was comparatively silent, and replied to Miss Eldon's remarks in monosyllables.

She noticed it, but made no comments. In a short time they drew up before Mrs. Dalvane's cottage, and Rowe alighting, assisted Nina out, and secured his horse to a tree. Advancing, he knocked upon the door, which was immediately answered by Mrs. Dalvane, who, as she saw her visitors, remarked:

"This is indeed a pleasure, I was just feeling very lonely, walk in."

They entered the little parlour, and Rowe, seating himself, observed:

"I fear that you will weary of my company. I come so often."

"And I too, as to that matter," interposed Nina. "You know, or at least ought to, that you are always welcome. I am the one who should thank you for your presence, for I understand from the neighbours that you are the notabilities of the town," concluded Mrs. Dalvane, laughing.

"Indeed," sneered Rowe, "precious fame it is to have your name bandied about by scandal-mongers. I will sell my share cheap."

"I am used to their talk, doctor; you will probably have to accommodate yourself to it as best you can," said Nina, smiling at his bitterness.

A moment's silence followed, which was broken by Rowe, who observed:

"I do not see Walter; he is here I presume?"

"Oh, yes," responded Mrs. Dalvane, "he is in his room, he will be down presently."

"May I ask what trade or profession you have in view for him?"

"I don't know that I ought to tell you; but I think Walter will excuse it, although you must not let him know that I informed you."

Rowe bowed; he barely understood this, and Mrs. Dalvane continued, explanatorily:

"He has already painted a few pictures which have met with success; but he is very sensitive in regard to it, fearing that, because he is young, people will be prejudiced against him, and also impelled, by what I can call a laudable ambition, to remain unknown until his works shall earn for him a name."

"Indeed, I am surprised as well as pleased," rejoined Rowe. "I have noticed something about him which puzzles me; this is the solution."

"Oh, he is an artist!" exclaimed Nina. "I do so love pictures!"

"He is at work upon one now, which he wished to finish before he came down; he had only a few more touches to give it when you came in."

"Oh, can't you persuade him to let me see it?" asked Nina.

"Perhaps you can make him reveal to you what he was doing," replied Mrs. Dalvane.

"I will, oh, I will!" cried Nina, gaily, "and he will tell me, I know he will."

At this point Walter entered. Nina looked confused, but seeing by his expression that he had not overheard her, her self-possession returned, and, advancing, she held out her hand, and the same time greeting him warmly, which he returned with equal cordiality; the brightening eye and the smile that illumined his features, testified to the pleasure it gave him to again meet her.

Mrs. Dalvane and the doctor were conversing together, and not wishing to interrupt them, Nina and Walter took seats side by side, her purpose being to force him to reveal to her his picture.

Taking up a sketch-book, which Walter had carelessly left upon the table, and which was very propitious for the furtherance of her desire, she said:

"May I look at this, Mr. Dalvane?"

"Oh, certainly," he replied, although he wished that she had not asked him; he could not refuse, however—politeness forbade it.

She resumed her seat, and opened the book, and together they inspected its contents, with occasional exclamations of delight from Nina, which were not lost upon her companion.

Closing the book, she raised her eyes to his face, and with an assumption of coquettish airs, said:

"Now, Master Dalvane, I am going to take you to task."

"Well, what about?" queried Walter, smiling.

"About the manner in which you treated me this morning," she continued, looking very severe, so much so, that innocent Walter really thought he had inadvertently committed some breach of etiquette, and with a puzzled expression, he remarked:

"I beg your pardon, Miss Eldon, but I am not aware of being impolite, or regardless of your presence. Will you please to inform me in what respect?"

She saw that he was taking it in earnest, and felt sorry for the moment to hurt his feelings; then she thought of the picture, and that urged her on. Dropping her eyes, and looking rather offended, she asked:

"Will you promise to answer all my questions?"

"Yes—certainly—of course," stammered Walter, wondering what she could have to bring against him, and not thinking of his rashness in thus binding himself to answer.

"Well, then, why didn't you come to meet me when I drove up?" continued Nina.

"I was not aware of your presence until I heard you laugh," answered Walter.

"Why didn't you come down, then? You allowed me to wait a full half-hour."

"I am really very sorry, but you must excuse me," responded Walter, who thought her charges very frivolous, yet humoured them.

"Why did you not come down, then?" persisted Nina, growing peremptory.

"I—I—yes—the fact is, I had a few things to do that detained me," stammered Walter, who now saw her object, and wished to keep the knowledge of his painting intact.

"What did you have to do?" continued the inexorable girl.

"I cannot perceive the object of this questioning," he said, seeking to draw her into argument.

"But I can," she replied, avoiding the bait he had thrown out, "and I desire you to tell me, will you?"

"I really cannot tell you," he rejoined, dropping his eyes.

"Cannot tell me? Hardly five minutes ago you agreed to answer all my questions."

This was true. He knew it, to his own annoyance, and how to free himself he did not know, nor could he think.

At last he said:

"I throw myself upon your clemency."

"You will fall through," she lightly rejoined.

"Come, answer my question—what were you doing?"

"Why can you want to know? It cannot benefit you," he urged, endeavouring to turn her from the pursuit of it.

"But that has nothing to do with it," she replied. "Tell me, I wish to know."

"But it is only a silly whim; you only wish to know," he responded.

"Thank you, Mr. Dalvane," she frostily rejoined. "I believe, however, that you gave your word; do you intend to break it?"

He hesitated—he was in a quandary—how should he escape honourably? he could use circumlocution no more—what should he do? A bright thought struck him. Arising, he gazed calmly upon her, and replied:

"Most assuredly not, Miss Eldon; but I did not say when I would answer."

Nina was foiled with her own weapons, he had raised a good point and she knew it, and was planning in her mind how to circumvent him, when the sound of Mrs. Dalvane's voice drove away her reflections, by hearing her speak to her son thus:

"Walter, Doctor Rowe has taken quite an interest in you, and I hope that you will not be sorry to know that I have told him that you are an artist, young as yet, but hope some time to be better known."

The warm blood dyed his face, his eyes flashed, and for a moment he was silent; then his anger was cooled by his strong will, and a deprecatory glance from his mother. In a moment he smiled and answered:

"You know best, mother. I thank Doctor Rowe for his interest; but hope that he will keep the knowledge to himself."

Then turning to Nina, whose face was now wreathed in smiles, he continued:

"The question you have so persistently asked is answered."

"And you will let me see it, won't you?" queried Nina, with a tender, pleading glance, that Walter could not resist.

"Yes, you incorrigible tease, I suppose I must," he laughingly returned.

"Oh, doctor, he has consented to let us see it," exclaimed Nina.

"A kindness that I appreciate," replied the gentleman addressed, rising.

"First," remarked Walter, "I must explain a little. The picture is a portrait. The portrait of a beautiful, very lovely girl, whom I saw in a dream. I say this that you may not think my picture is unnatural or too highly coloured. I have not attempted to make it conform to life, but merely to place upon canvass, the image which lingered in my mind, of the imaginary and angelic being, who was the heroine of a vision."

"Oh, tell us the dream," exclaimed Nina, with all of a woman's curiosity.

"That you cannot know," answered Walter, pleasantly, but firmly.

"You need not be so emphatic!" she replied.

Walter laughed, and led the way to his studio, followed by his mother and the company.

At the opposite side of the room hung a green cloth, beneath which was the picture.

Nina and Mrs. Dalvane stood at the right of and near the painting, while Doctor Rowe took a position at the left, and near the door. Walter advanced and lifted the covering.

"Oh, it is beautiful!" exclaimed Nina, "it seems

just as if she were about to speak! Oh, it is lovely, lovely!"

Miss Eldon was an ardent lover of paintings, and she was very enthusiastic over the really fine production, which did great credit to the young man's skill.

Mrs. Dalvane was naturally much pleased at this tribute to her son's ability, and as she had not heard the doctor speak, she turned towards him.

He was standing with his body thrown forward, and gazing upon the portrait, spell-bound. His eyes appeared double their usual size, and his face was a type of intense earnestness, while his whole mind seemed bent upon the canvass before him, and entirely oblivious to everything.

The three regarded him with astonishment; but said not a word.

Presently his expression changed, his face became very pale, his eyes grew unnaturally bright, he seemed in doubt; he advanced a few steps and gazed at the portrait as if he were drinking each feature into his very soul.

"The very hair," he murmured, his eyes bent upon the picture, "the same lustrous eyes, the same kind, dear features; it is—it is—"

"Who?" exclaimed Walter, anxious to know if it had a parallel in the world.

Rowe did not appear to hear him, but continued, dreamily: "That beautiful, white brow, the same golden curls, the same rich lips, the same exquisitely moulded nose and shoulders. Great heaven! it is—it is—my—my Florence Ormsby!"

Walter started convulsively; the cloth dropped from his hand, and the picture was shut from view.

Like an earthquake the words struck upon Mrs. Dalvane's ear, and shook her frame. That ghastly pallor again overspread her features, that terrible faintness seized her, and she became insensible; while from the bottom of her overcharged heart, and painted upon her thin features, seemed those awful words: "again, aye, and for ever and aye!"

Walter sprang to her assistance, and Nina stood gazing from Mrs. Dalvane to Charles Rowe in blank astonishment.

In an instant Rowe's senses returned to him, and darting a glance at Mrs. Dalvane, he dashed down stairs to his carriage, procured his medicine case, and in a moment was at his post, administering relief to the insensible lady.

In a short time she revived, and then succeeded that languor and restless wandering of the eyes, which had so troubled Walter.

"Are you better now?" asked Rowe, anxiously.

"Oh, yes! pray do not trouble yourself. I shall be perfectly well in a moment."

"Take this wine, it will do you good," urged the doctor, holding a glass of rare old Madeira to her lips.

She drank it, and in a few moments seemed much improved.

"I am sorry this occurred to mar our pleasure," she apologetically remarked. "I am subject to attacks of this kind, although it is some time since I had one, and had begun to hope that I was free of them."

Miss Eldon gave credence to the explanation; but Rowe was too skillful a physician, and too true a reader of human nature, not to know that her suffering was mental and not physical. He, of course, told her not to mention it, and supported her through that she might not think he thought otherwise.

Nina came forward, and imprinting a kiss upon Mrs. Dalvane's cheek, remarked very tenderly:

"I am so sorry that you are ill, but you feel stronger, do you not?"

"I do; you are very kind," returned Mrs. Dalvane, with a faint smile. She could not fail to note the kindness that was extended to her, and even in the midst of her sorrow it cast a faint ray of contentment.

Walter, too, noticed Nina's spontaneous burst of feeling, and in his heart he wished that the same favour might be extended to him; and not strange, either, that he should; that one act showed him that Nina Eldon possessed a good heart.

In a short time, by the efforts of the doctor's gentle attention, Nina's cheerfulness, and Walter's loving solicitude, Mrs. Dalvane sufficiently recovered from her indisposition to return to the parlour.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE subject of the picture was eschewed, and although his mother appeared cheerful, and conversed freely with her guests, Walter felt that the effect had been more powerful and productive of more sorrow than he had at first imagined. In consequence of this, he dreaded the departure of their visitors, for then he feared the return of the melancholy which clouded his mother's brow, and made him so unhappy.

He said but little during the remainder of the time his friends were present, but in spite of his efforts his eyes would wander to Nina, and contemplate with growing affection the kind, cheerful, mobile features. He had battled with this feeling, which by constant intercourse was gradually growing stronger; but all

to no purpose. He was well aware of the difference in their stations, and of his utter inability to think of marriage for years to come; yet he could not stay the uprisings of his heart, and rashly determined to enjoy the present and let the future take care of itself—a very good rule to follow in all affairs except love.

Nina arose to go.

Rowe beckoned Walter on one side, and said:

"Will you sell that picture?"

Walter hesitated. It was the face that had haunted him, the face of the good genius of his dream; he did not want to part with it, yet he did not wish to keep it, for it had now become a subject of pain and aversion to his mother. What should he do?

"Well, what do you think?" continued Rowe. "I will give you five hundred pounds for it."

Walter raised his eyes. "You astonish me," he said. "I could never think of selling it to you, but will present it to you, with pleasure."

"Walter!" answered Rowe, grasping him by the hand, "I deeply appreciate your generous principles. But allow me to give you a bit of advice—curl your generosity until you bring it down to the point when you give only to relieve trouble and poverty. It seems a hard thing, and in antagonism to preaching, to thus counsel a young man; but preaching is cheap, and the world teaches us many things that are unpalatable. Again I thank you warmly; but let me add, that the most substantial and practical way that I can demonstrate it, and prove to you the truth of my preaching, is this," and Rowe drew a roll of bills from his pocket, and held out five one-hundred pound notes to Walter.

The youth drew back. "No, no, doctor; indeed I cannot take it."

"I see you want more advice," interrupted the practical young doctor. "In a feeling of friendship, which I highly prize, but which in not legal tender, and impelled by your natural kindness of heart, you offer me a picture, the product of your great genius, the labour of many weeks, without any remuneration. The feeling, as I before remarked, is a noble one; but feelings will not support us; they are very well in romance and poetry, but fail if applied to practical purposes. Your heart prompts it, your good spirit offers it to me; but common sense, and a knowledge of the world compels me to refuse the gift in the kindest spirit, and with a full appreciation of your motives. Walter Dalvane, as you value my friendship, accept that money; and remember that—

"Tis a very good world we live in.

To lend, and to spend, and to give in;

But to beg, or to borrow, or to get a man's own,"

"Tis the very worst world that ever was known."

Walter could not fail to see the practical force and real truth of his friend's remarks, and with mingled feelings of curiosity and thankfulness—a strange mixture, but a true one—he accepted the amount.

Nina advanced to the door, where the doctor and Walter were standing, followed by Mrs. Dalvane.

"I will send to get a frame, doctor; and you shall have the picture in a short time," whispered Walter.

"Very well, send the bill to me," was the characteristic reply.

Adieus were exchanged, their visitors rode away, and Mrs. Dalvane and Walter re-entered the cottage.

It was as he had apprehended. As soon as the excitement was over, and she was left to her own thoughts, the moody feelings resumed their sway; and through the livelong day Mrs. Dalvane went about her duties, saying nothing; but the sad, painful look upon her face, expressing more plainly and more bitterly than words could, the trouble that formed the ban under which she existed.

The day passed slowly to poor Walter; it seemed as if it would never end. He dared not tell of the amount received for the picture, fearing that the associations connected with it would only be brought more vividly to her mind.

Evening came, and passed very tediously. Mrs. Dalvane could not command herself enough to hold any conversation; and Walter, with his own grief and that of his mother's at heart, felt miserable and retired early, not to sleep, however, for that blessed comforter would not woo his aching eyelids. He had wanted money—he had now more than he had ever had at one time, yet he could not quiet his feelings in regard to his mother. He heard ten strike, and still she came not. Eleven sent its peals from the little clock on the mantel, and shortly after he heard his mother ascend the stairs.

Still he could not sleep; he felt uneasy, and listened for the least sound that might proceed from her room; all was quiet there, however. He knew by the crevice in the door that the light was extinguished, and endeavouring to calm himself, he soon fell into a light and troubled sleep.

He might have slumbered an hour, when he was awake by hearing stifled sobs and footfalls. In an instant he was wide awake, and listened with a bitter interest to the low moans that tortured his heart, for he knew, and only too well, that they came from the lips of his mother.

He arose, and walking silently to his door, sat down and listened. It was midnight, and there in

the darkness, shivering both mentally and physically, sat the loving son, a sad witness to the low echoes of sorrow that reverberated from the heart of his afflicted parent. Words upon paper can but imperfectly describe the tumultuous and conflicting feelings that flooded his heart with the most acute pain.

Until he was nearly beside himself—until he wished that they both might die, and together—until he feared that his throbbing brow, and the wild, rushing feelings of intense solicitude mingled with sorrow, love mixed with fearful conjecture, would dethrone his reason, did he sit there. Then he arose, partially dressed, and with a kind of foreboding, knocked upon his mother's door.

For an instant, which seemed an hour, there came no reply; then he heard, in choked tones:

"Walter, my son—retire—and sleep."

"Mother, oh, mother!" he answered, his tone pregnant with apprehension and anxiety, "do be calm; each sob distracts me. For my sake quell your sorrow, or—or I shall die!"

"Leave me, my child; I will try, darling—I will try—but it seems as if my nature had at last given out."

"No—no, speak not thus: remember our blessings; remember the desert the world would be to either of us, were we left alone."

"I will try, noble boy; you are all to me. Now, good night."

As she spoke, she opened the door and gave him his good-night kiss. For an instant mother and son were clasped in each others' arms. Then, with her hot tears hot upon his cheek, Walter sought his couch, and after lifting up his heart in prayer to heaven to bless his mother, and lighten her load of grief, he fell into a gentle slumber.

Comforted, cheered, and calmed by her son's influence, Mrs. Dalvane struggled with her feelings. Slowly sweet sleep clothed her mind, and drove away cruel thoughts. And the little house was still; and both its inmates, in spirit bound together by the strongest, purest love of heaven, rested calmly.

I left Dr. Rowe and Miss Eldon upon the road on their way to her father's house. Nina was still talking of the picture and its beauty, and finally ventured to ask Rowe what caused his agitation.

"The picture is an exact likeness of a dear friend; and the cause of my surprise was the fact, that the face was presented to him in a dream, and he was enabled to place it so perfectly upon canvas."

"Rather say, doctor, that instead of a dear friend it is the object of your adoration."

"You have a right to your inferences, Miss Eldon. I believe I said nothing of the kind," he replied, a little coolly.

The rest of the way they preserved a comparative silence. After Nina had alighted, and they had exchanged adieus, Rowe chirruped to his horse, and started towards home at a furious rate. Why he did so he knew not; it was only an impulse, yet an irresistible one. As he flashed by, the dust rising in eddies, and his horse flecked with foam, the good people shook their heads and mumbled wise sayings, which might be construed into a fear that the young doctor was on the road to ruin, "for no good ever came of huss racin'," and a doctor, too," and then another ominous shake, and their mutterings ceased.

For a wonder, and to her credit, be it written, that Miss Bunt had nothing to say, and the young man passed on without interruption.

Locking himself in the library, he studied until dinner-time. Again Miss Bunt was quiet, and his lonely meal was partaken of in silence. Arising from the table, he ordered the groom to go to the post-office. He expected no letter, but this act was the offspring of another impulse.

In a short time the man returned, and, to Rowe's great surprise, placed in his hand a letter, along with a message from the postmaster to the effect, that, "it had slipped his mind in the morning."

Rowe glanced at the superscription. It was directed in a hand to him unknown, and post-marked "Liverpool." Hastily he tore it open.

As he perused it, his face blanched—expectation, astonishment, and doubt, rested upon his features, and starting up wildly, he exclaimed:

"Am I dreaming? My mother alive, guiltless, and calls me to her arms? Oh joy! Oh doubt! Oh strange, mysterious life! what next shall come to harass my mind? I cannot believe it, and yet it is true. Yes, she calls me, her son, to come to her arms and bless her declining days. How happy I am!"

He paused, and then slowly continued:

"Yet I am not happy; undefinable fear possesses me; a dread feeling comes over me; doubt lives within my heart. Shall I stay, or go?"

He glanced at the letter.

"Mother, you have called! Your son responds! He is a brute who would refuse his mother. I am decided: I go! I go!"

He rushed from the room and flew to his chamber, threw a few things into his trunk, rang the bell

furiously, ordered it taken down, and then, with flushed face, and eyes burning with excitement, dashed through the kitchen—to the infinite terror of Miss Bunt, who thought him crazy—and for the tenth time, ordered his carriage.

Returning, he stopped short before Miss Bunt, and in hurried tones ejaculated:

"I'm going to Liverpool—start now."

His excited manner and quick utterance completely overcame Miss Bunt, who stood and gazed at him a moment in bewilderment. Then passing her hand across her face, as if to clear her mind, she said:

"What do you mean?"

"Mean? Can't you understand? I'm going to Liverpool," answered Rowe, nervously.

"You are crazy, perfectly wild! What are you going there for? I—"

"Don't be garrulous; collect your senses, if you've got any!" ejaculated Rowe, who was very much excited.

"Oh dear, dear! you awful man, what is the matter now? I don't know whether I am on my head or my heels,—where did you say you were going?"

"To Liverpool! I've no time to waste. I shall be back in a month. Look out for everything. Send the groom three times a week to look out for Mrs. Dalvane. Do everything that you can for them. Now I'm off—good-bye, good-bye,—I'll write to you."

They had proceeded as they talked, and Rowe was now at his carriage, upon which his thumb had already been placed.

"Wait one minute—you are going to carry Sam off—you don't know what you are doing—you are crazy. Have I got to stay here all alone? I shall die! Oh, mercy sakes, you awful man, do tell me what to do!"

Rowe sprang into the carriage, and with the reins trembling in his fingers in his hurry to go, quickly replied:

"First, hold your tongue. I will send Sam back; keep all things straight—go on, Hero—good-bye, Miss Bunt—look out for Mrs. Dalvane."

And standing in the doorway, with a puzzled expression, and the tears welling up in her eyes, Miss Bunt saw the wild steed and his nearly frantic driver, dash down the road at a furious pace, en route for the station, where Rowe intended to take the train for London.

Miss Bunt turned away, and entering the house, sat down and cried heartily. She was a good woman, but she had an odd way of showing it.

"Oh dear, how lonely it is! I feel dreadful dismal! What will become of him?"

(To be continued.)

GEORGE I., Crown Prince of Hanover, has sought an order before Vice-Chancellor James, to compel the Bank of England to transfer £60,000, of consols standing on their books in the name of the King of Hanover, with the Dukes of Cambridge and Brunswick as trustees, to that of the plaintiff and the said Dukes. The hearing was adjourned.

FRANCE, though we buy her literature to the amount of more than 60,000*l.* a year, only sent us 385*l.* for the few English works she required; while Turkey paid us 3,193*l.*, and Chili 1,594*l.* for English publications. Germany also despatches English printed matter; she pays us not more than 400*l.* a year for all she imports.

How is it that the Judges and Chancellors succeed in attaining a patriarchal age, when this privilege is not generally permitted to ordinary mortals? Chief Justice Lefroy, who died recently, was ninety-six; Lord St. Leonards, who is alive and vigorous, is ninety years old; Lords Brougham and Lyndhurst were ninety; Lord Bathurst eighty-six, Lord Camden eighty-one, Lord Campbell eighty, Lord Crauworth eighty, Lord Eldon eighty-seven, Lord Truro seventy-three, Lord Erskine seventy-three, and Lord Thurlow seventy-four.

VELOCIPEDES FOR POSTMEN.—In the House of Commons recently, Mr. Hambrooked the Postmaster-General whether it was a fact that in certain parts of Wales the Post-office mails were now conveyed on velocipedes instead of on horses, and whether this change had been found to add to the efficiency and economy of the service. The Marquis of Hartington said the experiment had been tried, and would be still farther tried, of allowing the rural postmen in certain districts the use of these machines (laughter) upon roads that were not hilly and were adapted for the purpose; but, as the practice of riding or driving upon bicycles did not yet form part of the examination for the Civil Service, he thought it would probably be necessary, at least for the present, that the use of them should remain optional.

ORIGIN OF FAGGOT VOTES.—Although the Conservatives have always had the best of the faggot vote tactics, by reason of their more extensive landed

possessions, it is curious that the device had its origin in the scheming brain of an acute Whig writer to the signet. There was an inn at Fushie Bridge, in Midlothian, owned by a strong Whig partisan, and the landlady of which was popularly supposed to be the original of Scott's Meg Dods. It struck the writer to the signet that by a colourable purchase of the inn by a company consisting of as many men as the rent would give votes for, there would be an excellent opportunity for inclining to the Whig side the then nearly evenly-balanced electorate of the county. The scheme was quietly carried into effect, and the W.S. having done the legal part of the work correctly, the sheriff had no option but to place the bevy on the registration lists. It was not hard to see that what one party had done the other could do likewise, and a brisk competition went on for some years in more counties than one, till, from the cause we referred to, the Conservatives got the mastery, and then the Whigs thought it advisable to clamour against it. This, we believe, is the true origin of the fagot vote, but the practice has been pursued extensively in a number of different ramifications.

THE "END MAN."

I AM going to tell a plain straight-forward story, a story showing a little of life in a great city. I am by profession what is termed a Negro Minstrel, that is, I play in a minstrel band; my line of business is "Bones," or, as is termed, "End Man." Of course, everybody nearly has attended a minstrel concert, and of course they have noticed that the two negroes who sit on the ends of the row, play the tambourine and bones, and say the funny things that set the audience laughing; well, those two are called "End Men." I am "End Man." My name professionally is Joe Stout; what my real name is, I haven't any idea, because I'm an orphan, and my father and mother I never knew.

I was brought up in a charitable institution, having been left one cold night, wrapped up in a blanket, at the door of that place. When I was about ten years old, a relation of the superintendent of the institution that had acted as father and mother to me, called one day and took a look over the place. He was a business-man. He noticed me—I was rather a sharp-looking lad—and as he wanted just such a boy as I was, he took me.

I stayed with him till I was about seventeen. My situation wasn't a very pleasant one, because I didn't take much to business; I was sharp enough about some things, but I was slow about learning to read and write, though I did learn; but it came hard. What I was quick about was singing and dancing; and after I heard a tune once I had it; it didn't seem to be any trouble for me to catch the air.

Now these gifts, for gifts they were, for no one ever taught me, were clean out of place in the shop. But one night when a party of minstrels gave an entertainment at Odd Fellow's Hall, which I managed to have money to go to, I saw that that was the life for me.

I went to the managers next day and asked to go along with them. Of course they laughed and made all sorts of fun of me, but when they found that I could dance and sing pretty well for a youngster, and was willing to go just for my board, and agreed to carry out their hand-bills, trunks, do errands, in fact, not to put a nice point on it, do anything, they consented to let me go with them.

I didn't trouble myself to say good-bye to my master. I had the memory of a number of hidings that gentleman had bestowed upon me at various times very fresh in my mind. So next morning when the minstrels left, I went with them.

For the first six months I led a pretty hard life, for I had all the hard and dirty work to do, and, of course, was the butt for the jokes of the whole troupe.

Well, I travelled with them until they closed up, then I got in with another troupe; this was a small affair, going only into the little country towns. I had learned to play the bones pretty well, and could do a fair song and dance, and as I was willing to go for almost nothing, they gave me a chance on the end, so I became an "End Man."

Well, the show lasted about six weeks, and then we "bust up." I was a careful, saving fellow, and what little money I had received I had held on to, so I "lit out" (the reader will notice that I use, perhaps to him or her, odd expressions; but those expressions are so mixed up in my life and come so naturally to my lips, that if I were to try to change them round and get something nicer, I should spoil what little good there is in my story). I joined another party, and that party "busted up" after a little while just like the other. And so I went on for about five years, living from hand to mouth, as you may say; but all that time I was in constant

practice, and was making rapid advancement in the life I had chosen.

Finally, one night in a small town in Yorkshire, where I was showing with one of these little "Fly-by-Night" parties, named thus, because when business is bad and they haven't got the stamps to pay their bills at the hotel, they get their baggage out of the back windows (and precious little baggage they have too), and run away in the middle of the night, leaving the landlord to whistle for his money. An agent of one of the big minstrel parties came into the hall and saw me do my "acts." Well, the show he was agent for had just discharged one of their "end men"—and as luck would have it, it happened to be the "bones;" and the manager had gone on the end himself until he could get a man. Well, my acts struck the agent favourably, and I must say, that I was the only decent performer in the show, and the people in one place would have hissed us off the stage, but I showed in the town before and had a good many friends among the "boys," and that was the only thing that saved us.

Now this agent knew our party would "go up" soon, so he came to me and made me an offer to join his party and go on the end. He offered me two pounds a-week and all my expenses; you bet, I jumped at that offer. I wasn't getting two pounds a month with the party I was with. Besides, it was a big opening for me, to go on the end with a tip-top party; it was luck.

Well, I closed the engagement and joined the party. It was much ahead of anything that I had ever been with, and the first night I showed with them, I was as frightened a fellow as ever put on burnt cork; but, says I to myself, "do or die!" I had pretty considerable confidence in my own abilities. I knew very well that in the little country towns that I had shown in, that I was a big favourite. And I said to myself:

"The people are just the same in a city as they are in a little country village; of course, if they laugh at me and think that I am good in one place, why they will in another."

I made my first appearance with the party in York, and we had a big house. Well, I went on that stage determined to make or break.

It was as easy as falling off a log; my first "gag" (a gag is the little funny stories the end men tell) took 'em great. I walked right into their affections, and I got twice the amount of applause that the other end man did, yet he was an old established favourite, and got a salary of four pounds a week and expenses.

My career was upward and onward from that night.

I travelled with the party three seasons, then I got a good offer and I joined one of the stationary minstrels in London, and got a salary of ten pounds a-week for my services.

And that was the way I rose in the world. I had natural capabilities for the minstrel business, and I don't think that I should have ever made anything at anything else.

Now that I have told my history, I'll proceed and relate the story that I took up my pen to tell.

I had been in London a couple of years, playing all the time except a few weeks in the summer, when I laid off for rest. I was very popular with the audience; of course I had become acquainted with a great number of people.

One night, after the opening chorus and the first "gags" were over, I sat looking around the audience as usual, when my attention was attracted by two young ladies that sat very close to the stage on my right hand side; they sat in the parquet, and as my chair was in the extreme right hand corner of the stage, I was almost near enough to touch them. They were two pretty girls; looked enough alike to sisters. Both were brunettes, dark hair and dark eyes; one, however, was tall and slender-built, the other short and plump. There was something about the tall one—I use the word tall, to distinguish her from the other, for I judged she was about the medium height—that completely took my fancy. They were both dressed in black as if in mourning. There was a certain air about the one that I fancied—a way she carried her head—stylish! that's what I want to say.

I had taken a good look at her, and was saying to myself, "what a handsome girl!" when she happened to look at me and caught my eye. She didn't seem a bit offended at my look either; but she only smiled, then turned and whispered something to her companion, and from that moment neither of them took their eyes off of me. Well, I did my best that night.

We wound up the performance with a burlesque opera; and just as we formed the final tableau, I happened to glance at my two beauties, and they smiled sweetly in return.

I felt rather proud when I was washing off the

burnt cork; that night, in having attracted the notice of two such pretty girls. I determined to find out though, who they were if it was possible.

Next day I had an idea that I might meet my charmers, but no such good luck.

That night, however, when the curtain rose, the first thing that met my eyes was the beauties in the same seats in the parquet that they had occupied the previous evening. Of course I did my "level best" again, and was rewarded by their sweet smiles every time I looked at them.

After the entertainment was over I got hold of our usher that attended to the side of the house where they sat, and I inquired if he knew either of them; he remembered them, but said they were strangers to him, and he didn't think that he had ever seen them in the house before; so I didn't gain any information there.

The next night they were in front again, smiling as usual; but I thought I noticed, that while the plump one seemed to enjoy all the performance alike, the tall and slender one—"my beauty," as I had christened her—didn't seem to care except when I was on the stage. Of course I felt rather pleased at this, and I tried to do my best.

Every night that week the two girls were in front, in the same seats, and every afternoon I went out in hopes of meeting them. I thought the matter over coolly, and I came to the conclusion that if the girl had taken a fancy to me she would contrive in some way to let me make her acquaintance; because of course however much I might desire to know her, yet as she was an entire stranger to me it would be impossible to gratify that desire unless she was willing.

Sunday came, of course there was no performance that night, and of course I didn't see "my beauty." I never felt so lonesome in all my life. I had got used to seeing her face every night, and I tell you I missed it.

I thought the day would never end. I didn't quite understand the feeling that had taken possession of me. I had had a number of flirtations before, because it's a very common thing for silly young girls to fall in love with us minstrels, and write us foolish letters and all that sort of thing. But this girl was a cut above anything that I had ever come across yet; there was an air of refinement, of good breeding about her, which said "lady" as plain as could be.

Getting a high salary of course I dress well, diamond pin and all that sort of thing; but I freely own, that though I would have given almost anything that I owned in the world to have procured an introduction to my unknown beauty, yet I was almost afraid to meet and have an interview with her, for fear that she should discover that though on the minstrel stage I might be a very good comedian, yet in private life I was very far from being an educated gentleman; people always give me credit for being a civil, decent fellow, but still I'm not like a man who has received a good education and has been brought up with folks of refinement and culture; my bringing up had been rough, the minstrel shop isn't a very good school to rear a young man in, for, I must say, that though there are a great many gentlemen in the business, men of taste and education, gentlemen in every sense of the word, yet again, some of the negro minstrels are the greatest scoundrels that ever existed. I heard our stage-manager, John K— (and he's a gentleman, every inch of him), say once, that every man's life, however lowly it might be, had something interesting in it, something worth telling—and that's what put it into my head to tell my story.

Monday night came. I was in a fever for fear that my beauty wouldn't be in front; my hands trembled as I was blacking up. On the minute fixed for commencing, up went the curtain, and my beauty wasn't there—the night was rainy and the house bad—the seats occupied always by her and her companion were empty.

"The rain has kept them away," I said to myself; but I kept my eyes on the door all through the opening chorus.

After the chorus my "gag" came; it was quite a long one, and at the end of it I had to turn my head round to the "middle man" (that's the gentleman who sits in the middle and asks the questions, so of course I couldn't watch the door or the seats). But the moment I got through, I turned back again to my old position, and there, sure enough, sat the two girls. When I saw the face of my beauty, I couldn't help a slight start of surprise, for I had given up all hope of seeing her. I resolved to let her see that I had noticed her; so when the time came for telling my next "gag," instead of telling the one I had rehearsed to tell, I told a story about falling in love with a girl that I saw in a window, how she was in the window every day, how she smiled at me, and yet would not give me a chance for an introduction,

and how I felt that I should die if I didn't get acquainted with her soon. All this, told in the negro way, took first-rate with the audience; my brother performers were astonished at the change of "gags," but thought it was a joke of mine; but the girl in front understood it, for I could see a look of surprise, mingled with pleasure upon her face. Evidently she was not angry.

The next afternoon, as I passed, the treasurer saw me from the box-office, and called me in.

"Here's a letter for you," he said, with a wink, "it's a woman's hand."

I took the letter; it was in a little white envelope, perfumed a little, so you could detect it. I laughed at our treasurer's remark.

"Oh, some sell, I suppose!" I said, carelessly; and walking a few paces away, opened the envelope.

It only contained a card with this brief inscription, penned in a delicate hand, evidently by a woman:

"— SQUARE.

"Wednesday afternoon,

"Between three and four."

I tell you I felt pleased. I know, of course, that this must be from my unknown beauty. To-morrow afternoon then I should see her; she had understood my wish for a meeting, as expressed in my story at the minstrel hall last evening, and she had consented to gratify me. She had done it too in such a delicate, ladylike way, no nonsense about it.

That night the performance passed off as usual. The unknown beauty was in her usual seat, accompanied by her friend, and looking as lovely as ever. I continued to joke about always keeping my appointments, at which I noticed that my beauty just laughed a little, as much as to say that she understood what I meant. To say that I was happy that evening would only be the truth.

The next morning I was up early, attended our usual rehearsal, which took about all the forenoon, then I went to my room. I was a long time, because I was particular just then about my personal appearance; got my dinner, read the newspapers a little while, and then at a quarter to three set out for — Square.

I got to the square just about three. I walked slowly round.

I did not have long to wait, for at just a quarter-past three I saw the slender and graceful figure of my unknown beauty. She was all alone, and dressed all in black as before.

I saw that she had seen me; she bowed and came straight to me. She held out her hand—exquisitely formed, and cased in a little black glove—and saluted me exactly as if I were an old friend that she hadn't seen for some time.

"Mr. Stout, did you expect me?" she said with a charming smile.

"Yes," I answered; "I should have been disappointed if you hadn't come."

A more pleasant afternoon I never spent. Miss Hastings was finely educated, and of a lively, entertaining disposition. As for myself, I had sense enough not to betray my ignorance, and so got along very well. Of course I was getting deeper and deeper in love with the girl by my side every moment.

She told me her history, which was very simple. Her father had been a merchant; had died when she and her brother—who was a few years older than herself—were children. Her mother had died when she was an infant. Her father, at his death, had left considerable property, but it was invested in stocks, etc., and by his will, was to go to his grandchildren; his children only having the interest, which amounted yearly to about three thousand pounds; this was divided equally between Corella and her brother, and of course supported them very well.

I didn't ask her her history, because I didn't think that it was any of my business, but she told me frankly and freely. Of course I told her of my life—that is, how I had fought my way upward in the world. I told her that my parents were poor and died when I was a baby. She wondered at the coincidence, and said in her easy laughing way:

"Is it a wonder that we should both of us desire to know one another, both orphans, and alone in the world?"

"Yes," I answered; "but you are not alone in the world—you have a brother and an uncle, while I haven't a relation on the earth."

"My brother is very seldom at home," and I noticed that as she spoke a shade passed across her face—I instantly guessed that there was something wrong about the brother—"and as for my uncle, I never see him, although he attended to my education. About two months ago my brother had business in London, and as I had never been here, of course I wanted to come. As for my uncle, he's a strange, stern sort of a man, without a relative in the world except my brother and myself; he's worth a great deal of money too."

"An old lady, who knew and was a friend of my parents, once told me that my uncle, when a young man, was in love with my mother, but she preferred my father to him, and that he never forgave either of them, and even extends his dislike to us, their children. So if he should die, there is no doubt but that he would leave his fortune to someone else, and not to us."

The afternoon passed rapidly away, and I escorted her to her home, a boarding-house, and parted with her, promising to call upon her the next day. Her brother was, as it happened, gone away on business.

That night, as usual, she was in her accustomed seat in the hall, accompanied by the other young lady, who was, as Corella had told me, the daughter of the lady that kept the boarding-house.

Time passed quickly with me; every afternoon I called upon Corella, and we either spent the time in the parlour, she playing on the piano for me—she was an excellent musician—or else we went walking. Every night she was in her usual seat at the hall.

This went on for two weeks—her brother was still absent on business—though what that business was she didn't say; at the end of those two happy weeks to me, I could no longer conceal my love. I asked Corella to be my wife, and was accepted. She frankly confessed that she had loved me from the first.

We were married; a couple of the minstrel boys, and the young lady friend of Corella's, attended the ceremony as witnesses.

I took my bride home to my hotel, leaving a note for her brother explaining everything.

The first week of our wedded life was perfect happiness. A dozen times each day, at least, I asked myself the question:

"What had I done to deserve such happiness?"

As I have said, my wife was excellently educated, she could talk fluently upon almost any subject, and then she was so ladylike.

"If ever a man got a prize in the marriage lottery, then I'm the fortunate individual!" I often cried to myself.

My happiness was perfect.

The second week of our married life came and went; happiness still continued. I began to think that I was almost too happy to have it last. I was afraid every time my wife went out alone that she would be run over or that some accident would happen to deprive me of her.

In the third week of our marriage, her brother, Lee Hastings, returned to London. I had forgotten to mention that Corella had revealed to me her brother's business; he was a "sporting man," a man who bet on races, and other little amusements of that nature. Of course the moment I discovered what his business was, I had little fear of his anger; if he had been a man of position and standing in society, why I might have stood a little in awe of him, being only a "nigger singer" as refined society delights to call us minstrels; but I felt that I was better than a sporting man, any day in the week.

Well, I received a visit from Mr. Lee Hastings; he resembled Corella strikingly, he had the same dark hair and eyes, only he had a cruel sneer always about the corners of the mouth, while Corella's was smooth and shapely, and lacked the hard lines which were imprinted upon his.

The gentleman tried to assume an indignant tone, but I ain't one of the sort that can be bullied easily, and my brother, by marriage, soon found it out. I told him that I loved his sister, and that I had married her, and what's more, that having married her I intended to keep her. Mr. Lee Hastings thought a few moments, and then evidently thought the best policy for him was to make the best of it, now that he couldn't help himself, and so we parted, if not the best of friends, at least, not enemies. For my wife's sake I didn't want to have any trouble with him.

I had been married about three months, when my eyes were finally opened to a very important fact, and that fact was, that my wife's love was decreasing. She did not love me now as well as she had done three months before. I had noticed several little things that had occurred during the last month of the three, but like a good many other people placed in similar situations, I hated to believe that true, that I wanted to be false. But if I am lacking in breeding and in education, I am not wanting in common sense. It took me some time to believe the evidence of my own senses, but finally I did believe.

I'll tell you why; my wife Corella and I were not suited to each other. She was educated, well-bred, full of that subtle instinct that taught her to adapt herself to circumstances; she knew exactly what to say on every occasion and how to say it—what to do in every position in life and how to act; this it was that kept me in ignorance of her true sentiments so long, because I was now convinced that she had discovered her mistake in marrying me, even during the first week of our wedded life; but she had skilfully concealed it from me.

If she had been a perfect woman, or as perfect as some women are, she would have accepted her lot and borne her cross unshrinkingly, but she was far from being perfect, for if she had been she never would have made my acquaintance in the way she did, and so she never would have become my wife. Don't think for a moment that I was cross to her, or that I ill-treated her by look, word or deed, for I did not. I was as good to her as any man could have been; but we were not suited to each other; my manner offended her even when I was doing my best to please her.

Had she been a different sort of woman to what she was, we might have got on together; had she tried to teach me, to have raised me to her level, to have educated me in the little things that go to make up the etiquette of society, heaven knows I would have tried hard enough to learn; for I own I loved her, loved her in spite of the want of mind that she now displayed.

She became fretful and peevish, accused me of not loving her, of wishing to get rid of her. I am only human, and one day with her reproaches she got me mad. Then I told her she had herself to blame for marrying me, that it was she who had sought me, not I her; mutual reproaches followed, and at length she said that she was sorry she had ever seen me, and wished that she could go somewhere where she would never see me more. I replied that that was simple enough, we could separate and that would settle it—I would allow her so much a week of my salary. It was arranged on these terms and we separated.

She went to her brother. He called on me and proposed a divorce. This I would not listen to for a single moment. I had done nothing wrong, his sister was my wife; one day she would see her folly, return to me and we should live happily in the future. Then, this brother-in-law, dared to offer me money if I would consent to a divorce; what his object could be I could not tell, but that he had some object I was certain. When he offered me the money I gave him a piece of my mind. I used pretty plain language and I don't think that he misunderstood me.

At length he ended the interview by departing with a covert threat that some day I might regret not having accepted his offer. His threat didn't trouble me much.

A few nights after this interview, after the entertainment at our hall was over, in company with some of the boys, I dropped into a hotel near at hand to get some refreshment. I met Lee Hastings; he was with five or six other "sporting men," evidently like himself. He saw me; he was very friendly, expressed great regret that there had ever been any misunderstanding between us; said that he had been looking for me all day to explain. He confessed very frankly that he thought that his sister had been to blame for leaving me, and said that he would use all his efforts to have her return to me. Naturally I felt pleased at this. I began to think that Lee Hastings wasn't such a bad fellow after all. He introduced me to his friends, who, as he said, were all strangers to London, and he was showing them the sights; he asked me to join the party. Now as a general rule, I don't go round much after I get through my evening's performance, but he had acted in such a straightforward manner that I hated to refuse him, so I consented to join the party.

Our party of five just snugly filled one of the little rooms. Oysters and wine were ordered. I drank very sparingly as my head don't stand liquor at all. Lee Hastings, noticing that I didn't finish the wine, suggested some coffee. The coffee was ordered and brought.

"I'd like some sardines," said Lee Hastings, and he turned to me, who sat next to the door. "Just call that waiter back."

I opened the door, put my head out, and called after the waiter; it was a minute before I could make him hear me. When I resumed my seat, I noticed a peculiar look upon Lee's face. I had never seen the sneer about his mouth look so ugly as then.

"Gentlemen," said Lee Hastings, in his careless way, "there is some little family trouble in which my brother Joe is concerned, of which of course you know nothing, but as he hasn't drunk our wine toasts, I'm going to give you one with his coffee, which I'm sure he'll drink. May his family troubles soon be over."

I took a good drink of coffee to wash down that toast; and I must say that I began to have a better opinion of Lee Hastings.

We drank our coffee up slowly, laughing and talking the while. I noticed that Lee Hastings never took his eyes off of me, but watched me narrowly. Someway or other I began to feel sleepy; it came on me all of a sudden. I tried in vain to keep my eyes open; they would close in spite of me—a dreamy sense of stupor came over me. I felt as if I were going to faint, then the walls of the room seemed to

be revolving around me. The last thing I remember was hearing Lee Hastings' voice saying:

"He's very drunk, gentlemen!"

I knew I was not drunk. I was sick, fainting, I could not move hand or foot. The thought came to my mind that I was dying. I tried in vain to throw off the stupor, but it was useless, I was helpless as an infant; I became insensible—then a blank came in my life, how long I could not guess.

When I did awake it was in darkness. I felt as if I had just been through a fit of sickness. I was lying upon a little bed. I seemed to be shaking up and down. I felt deathly sick. Then the truth flashed upon me—I was on board a ship; but what was I doing there? Who had placed me in my present position? I strove to remember what had happened after I became insensible, but the attempt was a failure—all was a blank.

Then the door of the little cabin was opened and a man entered.

"Halloo! get up; you've been sick long enough; the captain wants you on deck," the man said, in a hoarse voice.

"Where am I?" I asked.

"Why, you know where you are well enough! What's the use of fooling?"

The mystery was growing darker and darker. It seemed as if I was under the influence of a horrid dream.

"Will you tell me where I am, and who I am?" I asked in desperation.

"You're aboard the 'Tycoon'; all I know is that you're down on the ship's books as 'Jim Tod, able seaman.'"

The truth then flashed upon me in a moment. I had been drugged, by that villain Lee Hastings, and then had been stripped of my clothes, dressed as a sailor and conveyed to this vessel and shipped. I now understood it all; this was the carrying out of the threat of Lee Hastings. The events of the night in the supper room came back to me. I remembered going to the door to call the waiter, probably 'twas then, when my back was turned, he had drugged my coffee. But what was the reason for this? Clearly to get me out of the way, then his sister—my wife—could procure a divorce. But I could defeat him. I would explain all to the captain, and if we met a homeward-bound vessel, as probably we would, he could put me on board and I could return.

With the assistance of the sailor, I managed to tumble out of the bunk; I was very weak from the effects of the drug.

I went on deck and saw the captain, an ugly-looking fellow, rough and surly. I briefly told my story, which he laughed at.

"My fine fellow," he said with a sneer, "a yarn like that won't do with me. You've shipped with me pretending to be an able seaman, while it's very plain that you're nothing but a green hand. I've advanced five pounds to pay up your board and bills on shore, now you can't crawl out of your agreement. I've seen claps of your kidney before. Now while you're on board my ship, you'll attend to your duty or you'll suffer."

I saw my position at once; either the captain had been imposed upon, and believed me to be what I had been represented to him, or else he had received a bribe from Lee Hastings. There was nothing left for me to do but to accept my fate. In time I could make my return, and then I'd settle with Lee Hastings in full. But what could be his object in running such risks to get rid of me? There was something in this, that as yet I had not known; time alone could reveal the truth.

I recovered my strength quickly, accepted my fate without a murmur, and being muscular in build and tough in limb, I soon made a tolerable sailor.

After a long passage, we arrived in Sydney. The captain informed me that I was at liberty to depart, and paid me the small sum due me.

Here I was in a strange country, with only a little money in my pocket, and not a friend. The money would not half pay my passage back to London. I walked up the street from the harbour, wondering what I should do—when a familiar object met my eyes; that object was a circus bill; here was employment. I managed to find my way to the circus. I was received with open arms. I found there friends that I had known in England. They offered me an engagement to "clown" in black. I accepted it at once. My performance was a great success, being something new to the natives.

I performed with the circus for some time, and then as a steamer was advertised to leave for England, and I had money enough to pay my passage, I said "good-bye" to the men who had befriended me in adversity, and sailed for London. I arrived in due time. My friends were surprised to see me; my mysterious disappearance had excited general remarks; all supposed that I had been murdered. I instantly employed a skilful detective to find out what had

become of my wife and her brother. In a few weeks he made his report. During my absence my wife had applied for a divorce; the reason for her wishing a divorce, and why Lee Hastings was so anxious to get me out of the way and obtain it, was that Corella's rich uncle had died and left her all his property; that wealth she did not want to share with me. The detective further informed me that she was engaged to be married.

Now for my revenge. I thought the matter over quietly, and finally made up my mind to go on my way in the world, and let them go theirs. I suppose it is needless to remark that all the love I had once had for Corella had vanished, and in its place came thankfulness that I was free again.

Corella and I were not suited to each other. I knew it now, and it was better for both that the bonds that bound us were severed.

I resumed my profession, and a twelvemonth or so after my return, I married again, this time a girl who makes me a good little wife. G. L. A.

FACETIÆ.

WHEN a woodman begins to work, what does he say? He axes the tree to get a supply of timber.

A YOUNG lady at school, engaged in the study of grammar, was asked if a "kiss" was a proper or common noun. After a little hesitation she replied: "It's both common and proper."

A WOMAN offering to sign a deed, the judge asked her if her husband compelled her to sign it. "He compel me," said the woman, "no, nor twenty like him."

INNOCENCE.

Charlotte's Beau: "So little Tow Head, you say you are a good boy; now, do you do everything that mamma says you ought to?"

Little Boy: "No, sir; nor you don't too."

C. B.: "Indeed! what don't I do that I ought to?"

L. B.: "Why ma says you ought to propose to Charlotte right away, an' not be wearin' out the carpets for nothin'."

A MEMBER of a temperance society excused his frequent drinks by saying that the doctor told him to take liquor as a medicine, and he never told him to stop.

A LONDON clergyman advertises that he will "lend" his weekly sermons for half-a-crown apiece, or four for 10s., warranted "original, earnest, and evangelical."

A PLEASANT FRIEND.

Jonesby: "How d'ye do Smithington? What's the matter with your neck?"

Smithington: "Got a boil in the back of it. A little painful, too."

Jonesby (suddenly recollecting): "Ah! that reminds me that I must tell my son that a friend of his died yesterday from a boil on the back of his neck! Good morning!"

A CHAP from the country, stopping at one of the hotels, sat down to dinner. Upon the bill of fare being handed to him by the waiter, he remarked that he didn't care "bout readin'" now—he'd wait till after dinner.

A "SERVANT GAIL" who had a "follower," told the lady with whom she sought a situation that she preferred that he should be kept in ignorance of the fact that she was doing housework, as he supposed she was "boarding."

INGENUOUSNESS.—Two young officers, after a mess-dinner, had very much ridiculed their general. He sent for them, and asked them if what was reported to him was true. "General," said one of them, "it is; and we should have said much more if our wine had not failed."

FEELING HIS WAY.—"Uncle," said a young man, who thought that his guardian supplied him rather sparingly with pocket-money, "is the Queen's head still on the sovereign?" "Of course it is, you stupid lad! Why do you ask that?" "Because it is now such a length of time since I saw one."

A GENTLEMAN who owns a country seat nearly lost his wife, who fell into a river which flows through his estate. He announced the narrow escape to his friends, expecting their congratulations. One of them, an old bachelor, wrote: "I always told you that river was too shallow."

A NOVEL VELOCIPÈDE.—An elderly gentleman has invented a one-wheeled velocipède, which is quite a novelty. It does away with seats, pedals, breaks, and all. There is a crank attached to the axle on each side of the wheel. You sit between the spokes, and turn the crank with your hands. The rider goes round with the wheel, turning a somersault at each revolution. The sensation is

therefore peculiar, and the ride is much more exciting than on the ordinary velocipède. The objection to this style is, they can never be used by ladies.

A PHYSICIAN was lecturing lately on the ignorance of people of their own complaints, and said that a lady once asked him what his next lecture was to be upon, and being told "the circulation of the blood," replied that she should certainly attend, for she had been troubled with that complaint for a long time.

A GENTLEMAN travelling in California encountered a panther, of which he subsequently wrote as follows:—"I looked at him long enough to note his brown and glossy coat; his big, glaring eyes; his broad and well-developed muzzle, and his capacious jaws, when both of us left the spot, and I am pleased to add, in opposite directions."

NEW METHOD OF BOOKKEEPING.

Some time since, a barber was brought before the police court at Paris, charged with having customers in his house after midnight. The examination was thus reported:

Barber: "It is the fault of this person, Merlon, who is in the court, as he has not time to be shaved until late at night."

The President: "You ought not, at all events, to disturb the peace; there were cries issuing from your house, as if you had been committing murder."

Merlon: "He was shaving; that's almost the same thing." (Laughter.)

The President: "Was it you, then, Merlon, who was crying out as if you were being flayed?"

Merlon: "Yes; in fact he was flaying me (a general laugh), he was cutting me horribly."

Barber: "It is very true, but I made a mistake."

Merlon: "Did you mean to cut me?"

Barber: "I do not say that (prolonged laughter). I certainly did not mean to cut him so deep." (Loud and continued laughter.)

The President: "Did you then cut him on purpose?"

Barber: "Indeed, I did, in the spirit of my order. You understand, one does not like to be below his business."

The President and Merlon together: "And why?"

Barber: "The whole affair is this: Mr. Merlon is not to be trusted, as he does not pay the ready money. He used to cheat me in the number of shaves for which he owed me; when he had twelve, he used to say that he had only six, so that I lost both my razor, my soap, and my time. At last I devised a method of keeping a reckoning not to be disputed."

The President: "How was that?"

Barber: "Every time I shave him, I make a notch in his cheek (general laughter), when we count up, I look at his cheek—so many notches, so many shaves (renewed laughter); but the other day the razor turned in my hand—I made the figure too large, and it was this that made him cry out and disturb the neighbourhood."

Amidst general laughter, the barber was condemned to pay the full penalty, and the President advised him to renounce in future his "new system of keeping accounts."

AN Irishman who had blistered his fingers in endeavouring to draw on a pair of boots, exclaimed, "I shall never get them on at all till I have worn them a day or two."

CHANGE OF MIND.—"Papa," said Tommy, the other day, "is it a sin to change one's mind?"—"Well, no my boy, why do you ask?"—"Oh, you know," replied the five-year-old, "I was to be a doctor."—"Oh, yes, I remember," said the father, "what then?"—"Well, if you please, I think now that I'd rather have a sweet-stuff shop."

"KEEP OUT OF BAD COMPANY."

"Why don't you take a seat within the bar?" asked one gentleman of another in the Court room.

"For the best reason in the world," rejoined the other, "my mother always told me to keep out of bad company."

That'll do; but we wouldn't like to have a case in court after saying it.

A LOVER on the point of marriage was conversing with his sweetheart on the Chinese custom of bandaging the feet of female infants. He said he supposed it was to keep them from gadding about, and that he approved of the custom. "Then," cried the sweetheart, "a Chinese wife will best suit you." The jig was up. They never married.

A SATISFACTORY TOTAL.—A Scotch Minister, after a hard day's labour, and while at a "deener tea," as he called it, kept incessantly praising the "haam," and stating that "Mrs. Dunlop at home was as fond o' haam like that as he was," when the mistress kindly offered to send her the present of a ham. "It's unco kin' o' ye, unco kin'," but I'll not pit ye to the trouble; I'll just tak' it hame on the horse afore me." When leaving, he mounted, and the ham

was put into a sack, but some difficulty was experienced in getting it to lie properly. His inventive genius soon cut the Gordian-knot. "I think, mistress, a cheese in the ether on 'wad mak' a graa' balance." The hint was immediately acted on, and like another John Gilpin, he moved away with his "balance true."

KNOWING HIS MAN.—A man was brought before Lord Mansfield charged with stealing a silver ladle, and the counsel for the crown was rather severe upon the prisoner for being an attorney. "Come, come," said his lordship, "don't exaggerate matters; if the fellow had been an attorney, he would have stolen the bowl as well as the ladle."

A SHOEMAKER received a note from a lady to whom he was particularly attached, requesting him to make her a new pair of shoes, and not knowing exactly the style she required, he despatched a written missive to her, asking whether she would like them to be "Wround or Squire Toad?" The lady, indignant at this rash specimen of orthography, replied, "Kneether."

PROVIDENCE OR THE PHYSICIAN.

A sickly man, slightly convalescing, recently in conversation with a pious friend, congratulating him upon his recovery, and asking him who his physician was, replied:

"Dr. Jones brought me through."

"No, no," said his friend; "God brought you out of your illness, not the doctor."

"Well, maybe he did, but I am certain the doctor will charge for it."

A BAD LABEL.—Tom bought a gallon of gin to take home; and by way of a label, wrote his name upon a card, which happened to be the seven of clubs, and tied it to the handle. A friend coming along and observing the jug, quietly remarked: "That's an awful careless way to leave that liquor!" "Why?" said Tom. "Because somebody might come along with eight of clubs and take it!"

ARCHBISHOP WHATELY once puzzled a number of clever men in whose company he was by asking them this question: "How is it that white sheep eat more than black?" Some were not aware of the curious fact; others set to work, and tried to give learned and long reasons; but all were anxious to know the real cause. After keeping them wondering for some time, he said: "The reason is, because there are more of them."

A RETREAT FROM THE MARRIAGE MARKET.

At a time when marriage, owing to the cost of housekeeping and millinery, has become impossible for gentlemen of limited means, and the generality of young ladies are either eating their heads off or going out as governesses, Paterfamilias and Materfamilias will rejoice to hear of an opening for any pictorial talent their daughters may possess at "The Female Gallery of Art," established at 104, Great Russell Street, Bloomsbury, "for the sale of works of art executed by ladies only." We hope to hear that this institution is really selling pictures, not painters, and shall then deviate from propriety of speech so far as to say, with reference to the latter, that gals will do well to try the above-named gallery.—*Punch*.

TEACHERS ON WHEELS.—It is proposed that our less-paid Clergy should make their parish rounds on Velocipedes! No, no. Leaders mustn't be Wheelers.—*Punch*.

GOING ASTRAY.—It will be a great mistake if our learned societies involve themselves in political discussions. We make this remark, because we notice with regret that one of these bodies has permitted a paper to be read before it on "The Property of the Radical axis."—*Punch*.

LABOR IPSE VOLUPTAS.

Rosy Philistine: "Ya-a, I discontinued smoking. I found I could do a perceptibly larger amount of work without it!"

Sallow Artist: "Eh! Gave up smoking for the purpose of doing more work! Well, that's the most extraordinary reason I ever heard! 'Gad! there's no accounting for tastes!'"—*Punch*.

THE SEASON OPENS WELL.—Horses are clever animals, but until the other day we were not aware that they could play cricket. It seems, however, that there has been a match at Lord's "between eleven colts of the South, with Hearn, and eleven colts of the North, with Grandy."—*Punch*.

WHO'S AFRAID?—The nation at large may make itself perfectly easy about its dispute with America. War can cost it nothing but its excess of population. The pecuniary expenses of any battles that the country may have to fight will of course, according to the Abyssinian precedent, have to be defrayed by the payers of Income Tax.—*Punch*.

LIGHT AND BUOYS.—The other evening, during a speech on "Light Dues," the President of the

Board of Trade seemed to get into a heavy mist, and broke down. Of course he was speaking from information supplied by the clerks of the "Lights and Buoys" Department at Somerset House, and we suppose the boys did not throw enough light on the subject.—*Fun*.

A FELL PROCEEDING.—Since the beginning of May there has been a succession of Fell-onies in the lake district of Westmoreland. On the fells of that region first of all the wind fell, then the snow fell, next the rain fell, and last the mercury fell.—*Fun*.

UNIVERSAL GENIUS.

HERE is a most ubiquitous musician!

"Mr.—R.A., teaches the piano at Clapham, Brixton, Balham, &c., and all parts of London, at his own residence. Terms moderate. Highest references."

Any terms must be moderate, and no references could be too high, for a gentleman who can teach the piano in all parts of London (not to descend to such small particulars as Clapham, Brixton, Balham, or even &c.) and yet in his own residence. Why, he must live all over London and the suburbs! Does he carry his residence—in the shape of a barrel organ—snail-like on his back?—*Fun*.

POT AND KETTLE.—We like a Kettle that does it, work without a deal of spout and vapour. All honour then to Mr. Rupert Kettle—the "Rupert of the Debate" between the employers and the employed at Manchester! Thanks to his arbitrations, there will be neither lock-out nor strike; and the wives and families of the workmen ought to be grateful to the Kettle that keeps the pot a-boiling.—*Fun*.

THE BLUE SKY.

'Tis true that youthful hopes deceive,

But ever the flowers return with spring;

That tenderest love has cause to grieve,

But still when the young birds pair they sing.

The west winds play with the leaves of May,

And the peach hangs ripe on the garden wall;

And the blossoms grow and the fountains flow,

And the bright blue sky bends over all.

Though love may fade with early prime,

As the cowslips fade on the fallow lea,

Yet friendship cheers the face of time,

As the sunshine gilds the apple-tree;

The morning's pain may be evening's gain,

And sometimes 'mid the flowers we fall;

And the sun for thee is the light for me,

And the bright blue sky bends over all.

The reason lives when fancy dies,

For the seasons' blessings never fail;

And winter oft has brighter skies

Than April with her sleet and hail.

Our joys and cares are wheat and tares,

And our griefs, when ripe, like the fruit, must fall;

And come what will, 'tis justice still,

For the bright blue sky bends over all.

C. M.

GEMS.

Nobody ever sees an action very wrong, when under the excitement of doing it.

Be not angry that you cannot make others as you wish them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.

The benevolent man loves mankind; the courteous man respects them. He who loves men will be loved by them; he who respects men will be respected by them.

Are you stepping on the threshold of life? Secure a good moral character. Without virtue you cannot be respected; without integrity, you cannot rise to any distinction or honour.

There are flowers that are repulsive at first sight, but when closely examined they unfold a world of beauty—and so with men. We should never judge a man from first sight, for he may have good qualities which will develop themselves on acquaintance.

"Some men will not shave on Sunday, and yet they spend all the week in 'shaving' their fellow-men; and many think it very wicked to black their boots on Sunday morning, yet they do not hesitate to black their neighbour's reputation on week days."

DISCOVERIES AT POMPEII.—Excavations were carried out lately at Pompeii, in the presence of the Prince and Princess of Piedmont. Senator Professor Fiorelli caused the earth to be removed which covered some houses. They found in one of them a bronze seal, the length and thickness of a finger, with the name of its owner: "Panters, son of Cajus,

and of the Flaminian tribe." They also found a wooden casket, encircled by bands of bronze with graceful decorations; amongst others six heads of the same metal and of fine workmanship; the wood was almost entirely consumed by the damp, excepting parts near the hinges. They also discovered a brazier in smooth bronze, objects in glass (most of them in pieces), and a woman's necklace in blue glass. These objects indicate that their owner enjoyed a certain position of ease. They did not present any remarkable appearance.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

When writing by common ink has become faded by age so as to be nearly or quite illegible, it may be restored to its original hue by moistening it with a camel's hair pencil or feather dipped in tincture of galls, or a solution of ferro-cyanide of potassium, slightly acidulated with hydrochloric acid. Either of these washes should be very carefully applied, so that the ink may not spread.

THE PROPERTIES OF TEA.—The physiological properties of tea are similar to those of coffee; it is slightly astringent and tonic, and when used without milk or sugar is a similar remedial agent in nausea and indigestion; but if sugar is added it is converted into a thin syrup, which is more apt to produce indigestion than the consumption of many times its weight of pure candy, since sugar is more digestible in the concentrated than in the dilute state. It is a mild stimulant to the skin and kidneys, it prevents sleepiness, counteracts the effects of alcohol, and reduces the rate of the waste of the tissues, an action supposed to be due to the theine, or peculiar principle of the plant, the quantity of which is variously estimated from one half of one to four per cent., and which closely resembles caffeine, or the principle of coffee. It is also an aphrodisiac of considerable power, and the rapid increase of the population in China is, by some, supposed to be due to its universal use by all classes. In addition to its other properties, the Chinese regard it as a preventive of gout and calculus. It no doubt has the power of preventing the latter; but this action is probably due to the fact that, if water is boiled, the greater part of the carbonate of lime it contains, and which would enter into the composition of a calculus, is precipitated, therefore the drinking of boiled water would be equally effective in influencing the prevalence of this disease.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The pruning-knife will shortly be at work again in the Treasury and Foreign Office.

A new tenor has arrived in Paris from Hanover. His name is Karl Norbert.

The cost of telegrams between the Government and Her Majesty during the stay at Balmoral is 250*l*.

The finding of a monster diamond in the neighbourhood of the Orange River is announced. It weighs 83½ carats, and is valued at 25,000*l*.

INSTRUCTIONS have been issued from the War Office forbidding the marking of soldiers a second time with the letter D.

A RUMOUR comes from Berlin that Mrs. Abraham Lincoln is to marry Count Schmidtwill, Grand Chamberlain of the Duke of Baden.

A FRENCH invention seems likely to come into use freely in all wine-growing districts of Europe. It is for the extraction of the juice of the grape by atmospheric pressure.

CHALLENGING TO FIGHT A DUEL.—An extraordinary case has been brought before the magistrate at Woolwich Police-court. A Professor Valentin, of the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, was summoned for violently assaulting and challenging Professor Cassal, of the London University, to fight a duel. That gentleman and M. Valentin had been members of the French National Assembly up to the time of the *coup d'état*, and had come to England together in 1851. They were on good terms for a time, but some five years since they had a misunderstanding, and ceased to visit each other. M. Cassal had quite lost sight of Valentin till the other evening, when, as he was leaving the house of a sick friend he had been to visit, Valentin, who happened to be staying in the house, followed him, and, without uttering a word, dealt him two violent blows on the temples, which gave him considerable pain. Valentin subsequently, when asked for an explanation, declined to give it, but sent a challenge instead. This, however, M. Cassal, acting on the advice of his friends, had the good sense to decline, and he instituted the present proceedings. Valentin was committed for trial, bail being taken.

CONTENTS.

Page	Page
AFTER THREE YEARS	121
OUR FOOD PROSPECTS	124
A ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE	125
THE RIVAL SISTERS	124
THE LONGEST RAILWAY IN THE WORLD	127
THE MANUFACTURE OF MUSTARD	127
THE PROPHECY	128
DUCTILITY OF GOLD	130
THE WOODMAN'S BARBER	130
HUGH WARING	130
THE SHELL GATHERER	136
SCIENCE	136
THE LIGHT OF THE SKY	136
A DIVING ENGINE OF THE LAST CENTURY	136
BALLOON EXPERIMENTS	136
FAIRLEIGH; OR, THE BANKER'S SECRET	137
VELOCIPEDES FOR POSTMEN	139
ORIGIN OF FAGGOT VOTES	139
THE "END MAN"	140
FACETTES	143
THE BLUE SKY	143
GENES	143
HOUSEHOLD TREASURES	143
MISCELLANEOUS	143
FAIRLEIGH; OR, THE BANKER'S SECRET, commenced in	299
THE PROPHECY, commenced in	303
AFTER THREE YEARS, commenced in	312
THE RIVAL SISTERS, commenced in	316
THE SHELL GATHERER, commenced in	317

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A. B. C.—There can be no claim without a written agreement.

TRY AGAIN.—If suitable for our columns, they will, of course, be paid for at our usual rate.

FLORENCE OMBERT.—He can be sued; but there is not much chance of obtaining compensation.

N. W. R.—Pittman's system is generally considered the best.

M. A. C.—We cannot make out your calligraphy. Write plainer, and we shall be glad to answer the question.

HOUSEHOLDER.—You can get satisfaction by summoning him to the county court.

INOSIDE.—The Long Parliament met Nov. 3, 1640. It was forcibly dissolved by Cromwell, April 20, 1653.

V. W. T.—Cocker's Arithmetic first appeared in 1677. It was written by John Hawkins.

H. J. D.—You would be able to procure them through a toy-merchant in Dublin.

S.—Astrology is no science at all, but "a mockery, a snare, and a delusion," out of which unprincipled people obtain a comfortable living.

P.—To acquire a sound knowledge of the law you must read early and late. Begin with Stephen's edition of "Blackstone's Commentaries."

ADELIA LOUVAINE.—The document stands good in law, but you would require to proceed against the person in this country.

A CONSTANT READER.—If you can prove there was money left, you can force her to account for it, and divide.

PAUL.—1. Holy water is said to have been used in churches as early as 120. 2. Earrings were worn by Jacob's children, 1732, B.C.

ROBERT D.—1. Giasour is Turkish for infidel, a term applied to all who do not believe in Mahomedanism. 2. Byron's poem, "The Giasour," was published in 1813.

TOMASO VULNAY.—Your father is the best person to consult. Be guided by his advice. Yes—we think he has acted very fairly.

R. V. W.—Such men are quacks. Go to a respectable practitioner. Diseases of the throat are dangerous if tampered with.

W. G.—We have no faith in the office, and would advise your friend not to send any money. The system is at all times bad, and open to the perpetration of great roguery.

LILY MADELINE (Neath).—1. We explained what the superstition was in our answer—"to bite and snarl and draw daggers on the world"—a quarrelsome, dangerous person, in fact. 2. The wages are good.

AME.—The pad will do no injury. It is evident that the harm is done by too much worry of mind. Try to get into a more cheerful condition. Take open air exercise, and your malady will disappear in time.

A. B.—1. Doctors' Commons is in London. There is no such place in Norwich. 2. You must either get a friend to call, or do so yourself. The address is St. Paul's Churchyard.

WEAK STOMACH.—1. There is very little difference; both are very nourishing. 2. The crumb. 3. New bread is very indigestible. 4. If kept in a clean covered pan about a week.

ARTHUR BROUGHTON.—The best course is to consult a magistrate in the first place. The society would undertake the prosecution, if they were satisfied that it warranted its interference.

PRINTER.—1. The ancient black inks were composed of soot and ivory black. Vitruvius and Pliny mention lamp-black. 2. Indian ink was brought from China, and is of great antiquity.

JAMIE LYLE.—You would have to pay one shilling at Doctors' Commons for a perusal of the will, and a farther fee of sixpence for every seventy-two words abstracted from thence.

W. SAY.—If the debtor goes away without notice you can, after a reasonable time has elapsed, get an order to sell his goods to liquidate the amount. All depends upon the circumstances under which he left.

MARIE wishes to know why she has never received an offer, although she is, generally speaking, paid a great deal of attention to by the opposite sex at balls, parties, during promenades, &c. Marie is eighteen, tall, with dark brown hair and eyes; very domesticated, and of a cheerful disposition. Marie, as the Scotch song says, is "O'er young to marry yet," so she may wait a little

longer. Still, out of compassion, we must say she ought to have a lover. Wooing and winning with a lady ought to begin at eighteen; merrymaking and sorrowing at twenty-one! So say the doctors of physic and divinity, and of course they cannot be wrong.

BLANDELLA.—1. Do not eat much meat and refrain from drinking malt liquors; take plenty of exercise and rise early. 2. If you are troubled with scurvy, avoid fresh animal and vegetable food, and partake freely of ripe fruits and lemon juice. Avoid cold and damp.

GOLDEN HAIR.—We should decidedly say white for a bride. The hair should be arranged as simply as possible. It is a most absurd idea for ladies to imagine that the present style of dressing the hair adds to their grace or beauty.

DYER.—1. Scarlet, or kermes dye, was known in the East in the earliest ages. 2. Cochineal dye, 1513. 3. Kopley, a Fleming, established the first dye-house for scarlet in England at Bow, 1648. The art of dyeing red was improved by Brewer, 1697.

ELIZA.—Velocipedes are vehicles of German construction. They first appeared in England in April, 1818, and obtained the name from being impelled by the feet with great celerity, the mover of the vehicle sitting astride upon it as upon a rocking horse.

CHRISTABEL.—The most essential point in our intercourse with children is to be perfectly true ourselves. Every other interest ought to be sacrificed to that of truth. When we in any way deceive a child, we not only show it a pernicious example, but we also lose our own influence over it for ever.

FLORENCE.—1. George IV. visited Ireland in August, 1821. 2. Roman Catholic emancipation on April 13, 1829. 3. Dr. Whately was a supporter of the Irish National School System. He became Archbishop of Dublin in 1831. 4. O'Connell's last speech in the Commons was on Feb. 8, 1847.

THE CITY STREAM.

The city stream, from morn to night,
Doth ever onward glide

Not like the stream in rustic sight
That leaps the mountain side,

But gliding on 'mid worldly strife,
With busy murmur ring and

And bearing on 'mid active life
The city's busy throng.

Borne away with worldly dream,
Gliding with the city stream.

Both youth and age do side by side
Together float along;

In search of wealth they onward glide
Amid the busy throng.

And many, too, with doubts and fears
Guide on with inward pain,

And widows tolling 'mid their tears
For bread, their scanty gain.

Borne away with sorrows' dream,
Gliding with the city stream.

J. O.

ANXIOUS MOTHER.—We think that your conduct towards the girl is too harsh. At her age there is nothing reprehensible in walking out with a young man. Invite him to the house, and you will have what you most anxiously desire, your daughter more under your own eyes.

HERALD.—1. *Je meindienst* (I will maintain) was the motto of the house of Nassau. When William III. came to the throne of England he continued this, but added, "the liberties of England and the Protestant religion," at the same time ordering that the old motto of the royal arms, *Dieu et mon droit*, should be retained on the great seal. 2. 1669.

PERCUSSION.—The Minie rifle was invented at Vincennes in 1835 by M. Minie, who was born in 1800. From a common soldier he raised himself to the rank of *chef d'escadron*. His rifle is considered to surpass all made previous to it for accuracy of direction and extent of range. It was adopted by the French, and, with various modifications, by the British army in 1852.

COMIQUE.—1. We do not know how you can obtain an engagement. The *Eva* is the recognised organ of the theatrical profession. 2. Some are respectable and, we have reason to believe, others are the contrary. We should not advise you to come to town unless you can afford to live without employment for at least a couple of months. 3. May, Bow Street. 4. We do not know a teacher of a circus-clown's business.

HESTER L.—1. Among the ancients a beverage prepared with honey, such as that known as *methaglin* in England. 2. It was the custom to drink of diluted honey for thirty days, or a moon's age, after a wedding-feast, and hence arose the term "honeymoon," of Teutonic origin. Attilla, the Hun, drank it, it is said, so freely of hydromel on his marriage-day, that he died of suffocation, 453.

A CONSTANT READER.—1. The Governors of the Foundling Hospital do not care where the child is born, nor about the sex or name of the accoucher. They consider whether the burden of maintenance falls solely on the mother, and whether, if relieved, she is likely to regain her position, judging from her previous character. The admission of the child is considered only with a view to her restoration to society.

KENTUCKY.—The Monroe Doctrine is a term applied to the determination expressed by James Monroe, President of the United States, 1823, not to permit any European power to interfere in restraining the progress of liberty in North and South America. This doctrine was referred to in 1850, with the view of weakening the influence of Great Britain and Spain on the American continent, and in 1855, with relation to the New Mexican empire.

JULIA.—Conversation resembles the flowing of a mighty river. At its commencement, when it first trickles from its rocky source, its transparent waters brighten the little pebbles over which it flows, and its tiny ripples, as they dash along in their precipitous course, sparkle with each ray of light, and gladden the heart of the beholder with their brilliancy. anon, the broad channel is contracted, and the streamlet increasing in depth, as it ad-

vances, and gathering strength and volume on the way, with difficulty presses through its narrow banks. The rapidity of the current is lessened, the glowing ripples are gone, but in their place are depth and vigour. No longer turning aside to play with shining stones, or dance with the sunbeams, profoundly and quietly it passes on, overcoming all obstacles.

COPYHOLDER.—1. If your father died intestate, the step-mother could claim one-third and the children two-thirds of the property; the father, of course, has power to make a will altering this as he thinks proper. 2. If the copyholder is lost we do not see what remedy you can have. 3. The difference between leasehold and copyhold is this: the first extends so long as is stated in the lease; copyhold extends so long as it is in your possession. 3. Your first letter did not come to hand.

BLANCHE.—Ladies of dark complexion should not wear green as it imparts a sickly orange tint to the face; dark blue is very becoming. 2. Pink would look well. 3. When boots are short it not only disfigures the foot, but is positively injurious, people often having to pay the penalty by bunions, &c. 4. Hair dark brown. 5. Handwriting would be very good if you took more time and did not make so many flourishes. 6. The style of composition is very fair, but we counted two words spelt wrong. Practice writing from dictation.

CHEMIST'S ASSISTANT.—1. We should not advise you to try the experiment. It would certainly be dangerous, and lay you open to a criminal prosecution. 2. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu introduced inoculation for small-pox into England from Turkey. In 1718 she had her own son inoculated at Adrianople with perfect success, and she was allowed to have it tried for the first time in England, on seven condemned criminals, in 1721. In 1722 two of the royal family were inoculated. 3. Vaccine inoculation was introduced by Dr. Jenner, Jan. 21, 1790.

JOHN B.—The foundations of the British nation were laid by five distinct peoples. First, the ancient British, then the Provincial or Romans, then the Saxons, then the Danes, and lastly, the Normans. Christianity was introduced under the Romans. The really Augustan age of English literature was that of Queen Elizabeth, for it belonged Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Walter Raleigh, Spenser, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and those radiant immortals—Lord Bacon and Shakespeare. Sir William Wallace was executed in the reign of Edward I.

ALICE.—Cheerfulness is a great blessing, and is the parent of many others. It gives a relish to simple fare, adds a charm to plain features, and keeps down petty troubles. Cheerfulness, in fact, is another name for health; it is difficult for people, when out of health, to be cheerful. There are causes of cheerfulness, as well as causes of gloom and despondency. On dull, foggy, or rainy days, we feel less animation than in fine, sunshiny weather, and light, if not the chief, is one of the principle causes of cheerfulness. Therefore, let your house receive as much as possible of this splendid gift of Providence.

MARTHA.—To have a good cup of tea much depends on the shape and management of the tea-pot. A round tea-pot is found to draw better than an oval one. For material the preference is due in the following order:—Silver, foreign china, Britannia metal, black Wedgwood, English china. For management of the tea-pot—Never let it be dipped in the vessel in which tea-things are washed, but having removed the drained leaves, fill the tea-pot with boiling water, and empty it in the vessel for washing up the rest; drain and wipe the inside with a perfectly clean and dry cloth, and keep the lid off or open. If a tea-pot lid is closed but a few hours, a dampness gathers which soon becomes musty.

T. F. S., tall, dark and respectable. Respondent must be amiable and domesticated.

JESSIE B., tall, fair and well educated. Respondent must be affectionate and respectably connected. *Cartes de visite* to be exchanged.

CHARLES H., with an income of 500*l.* a-year. Respondent must be amiable and affectionate. Would like *cartes de visite*.

ANNIE R., medium height, dark, domesticated, fond of home and respectable. Respondent must be rather tall, affectionate, and not under twenty-one. A tradesman preferred.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

MINNIE is responded to by—"H. H.," in a good business.

A. B. L. by—"Lilly," twenty, tall, fair, rather pretty, domesticated, and willing to travel. *Cartes de visite* to be exchanged.

HAPPY HARRY by—"Lavinia L.," nearly twenty, dark, well educated, musical, and fond of home. Would like *cartes de visite*.

MARTIN by—"H. R. H." (a young clerk), medium height, fair, good tempered and steady. Would like to exchange *cartes de visite*.

ROBERT by—"Rose in May," eighteen, thoroughly domesticated and fond of music. Would exchange *cartes de visite*.

LINDA N. by—"Jenkins T."

C. D. M. by—"Ada," nineteen, good looking, amiable, and fond of home; would like to exchange *cartes de visite*.

PART LXXIII., FOR JUNE IS NOW READY. PRICE 6*d.*

*. Now Ready, VOL. XII. of THE LONDON READER. Price 4*s.* 6*d.*

Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. XII. Price 0*s.* 6*d.*

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

††† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

London: Printed and Published for the Proprietor, at 334, Strand, by J. WATSON.